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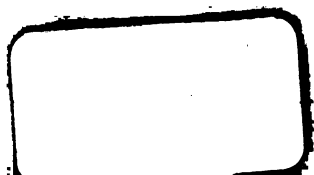
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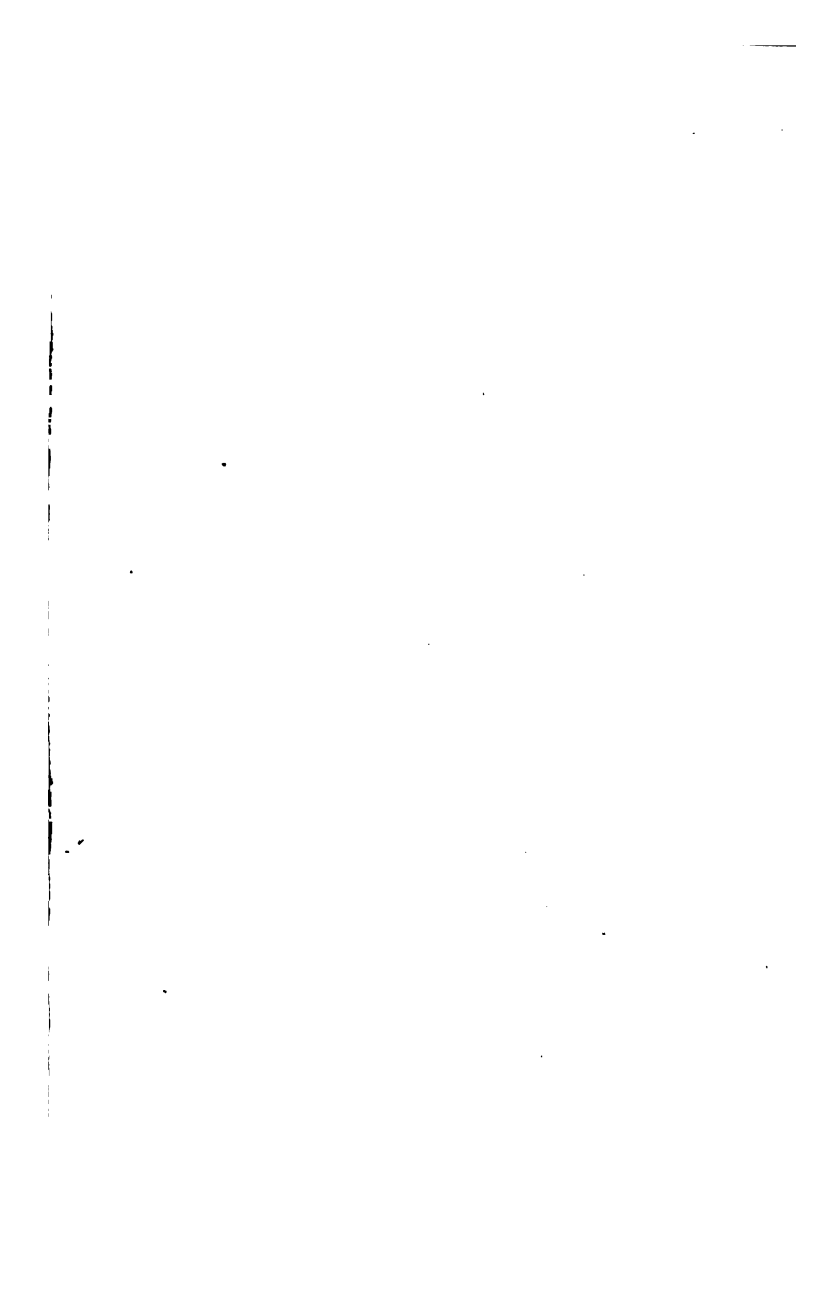
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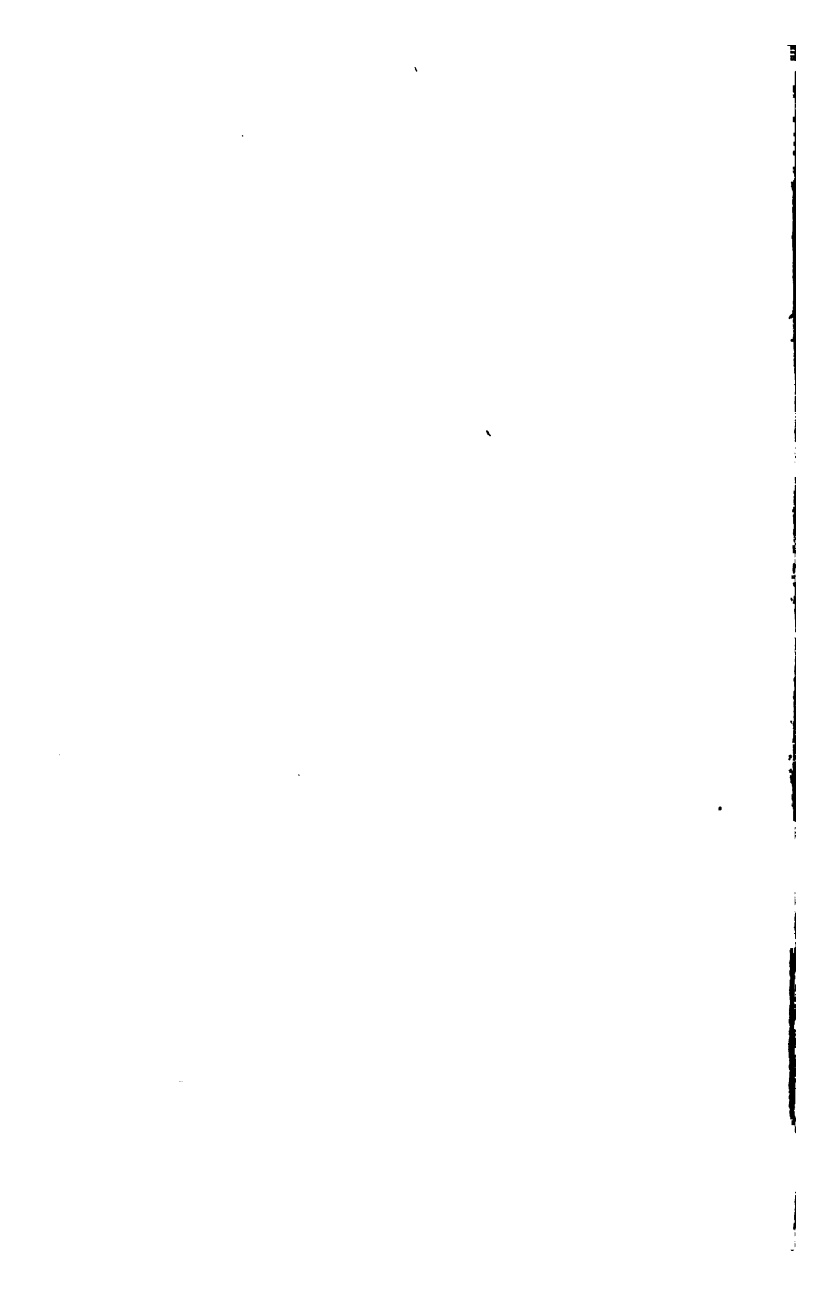
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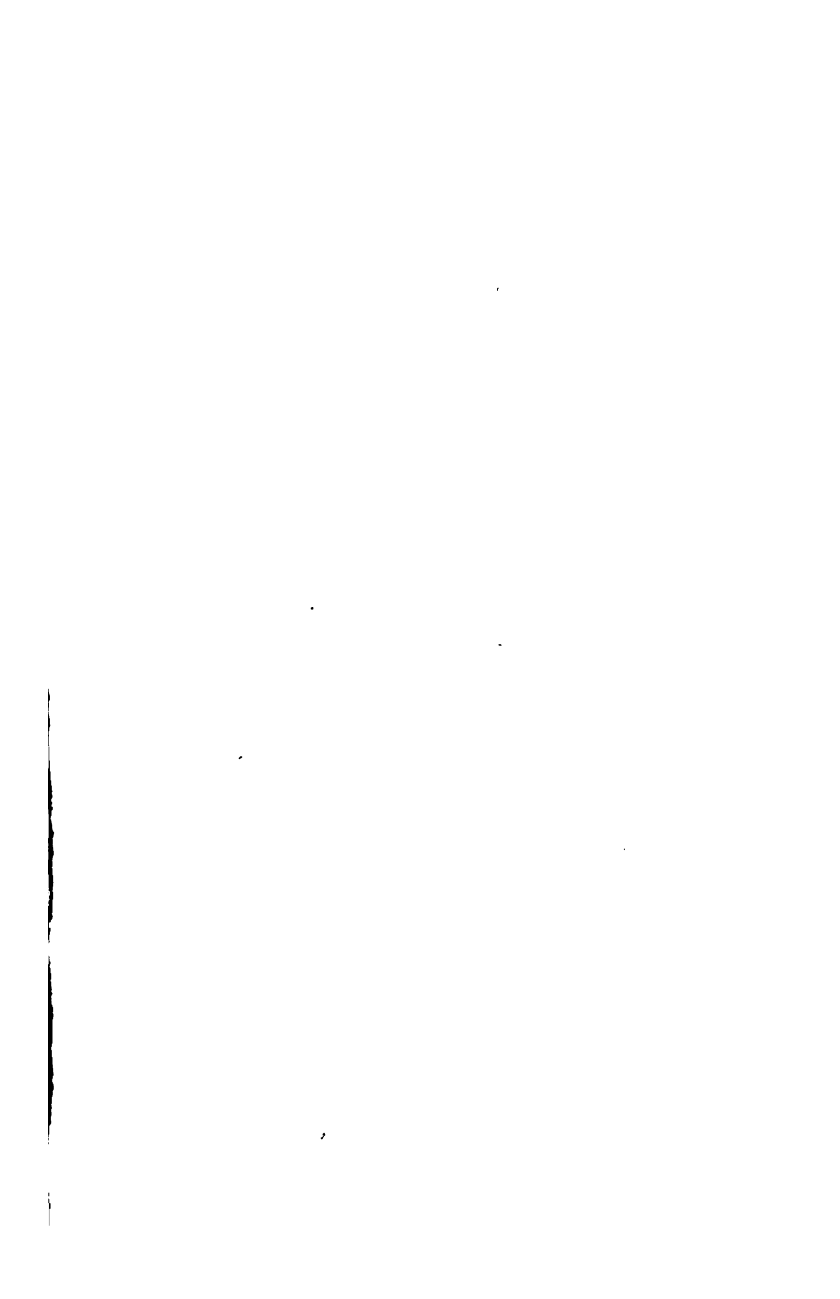
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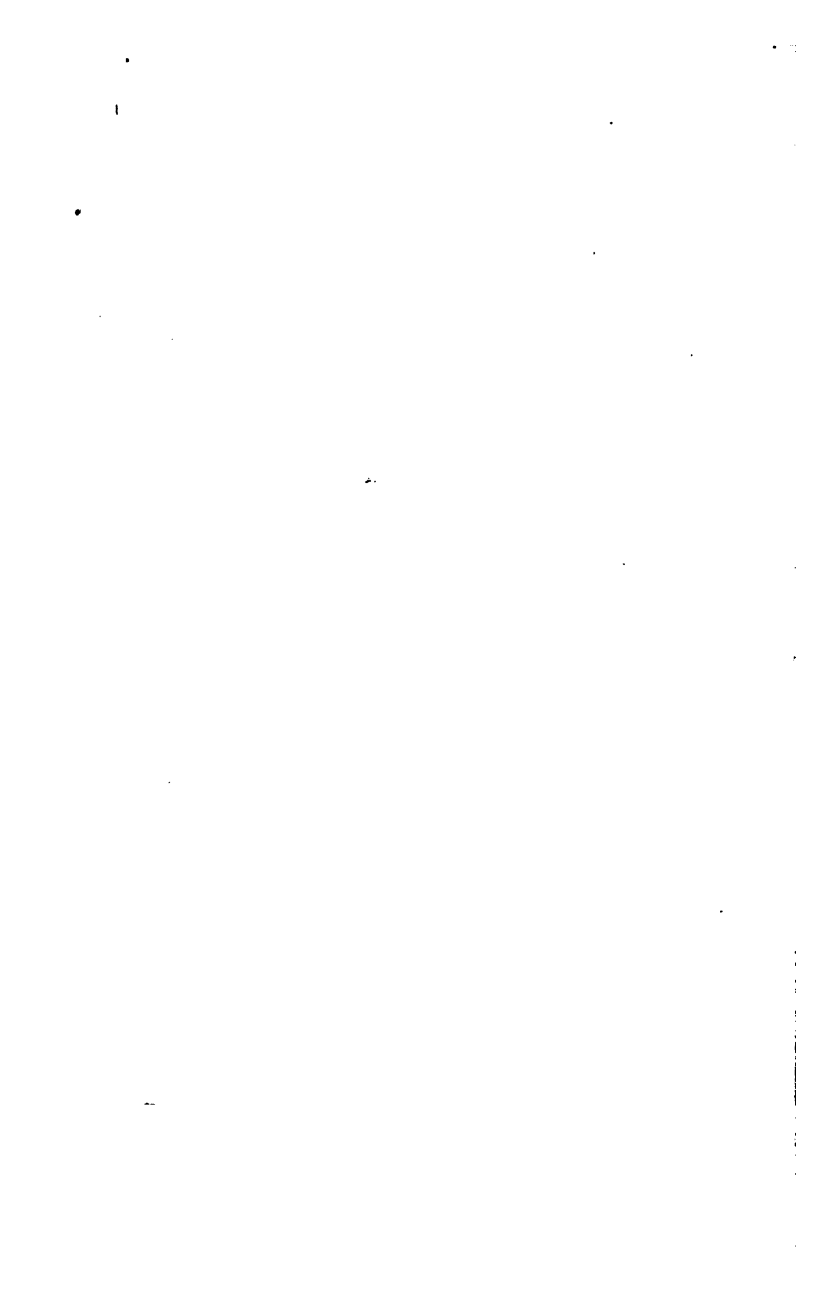
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THE
FABLES OF JOHN GAY
ILLUSTRATED.

WITH AN ORIGINAL MEMOIR, INTRODUCTION,
AND ANNOTATIONS,

BY

OCTAVIUS FREIRE OWEN, M.A. F.S.A.

OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD;

RECTOR OF BUNSTOW, SURREY; TRANSLATOR OF THE ORGANON OF ARISTOTLE,
ETC. ETC.

WITH

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIX DRAWINGS BY WILLIAM HARVEY,
ENGRAVED BY THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

London:

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TO MY CHILDREN,

THEODORE, EDITH, FLORENCE, EUSTACE, AND RUPERT,

THIS EDITION OF A WORK

FRAMED TO AMUSE THE CHILD AND YET INSTRUCT THE MAN,

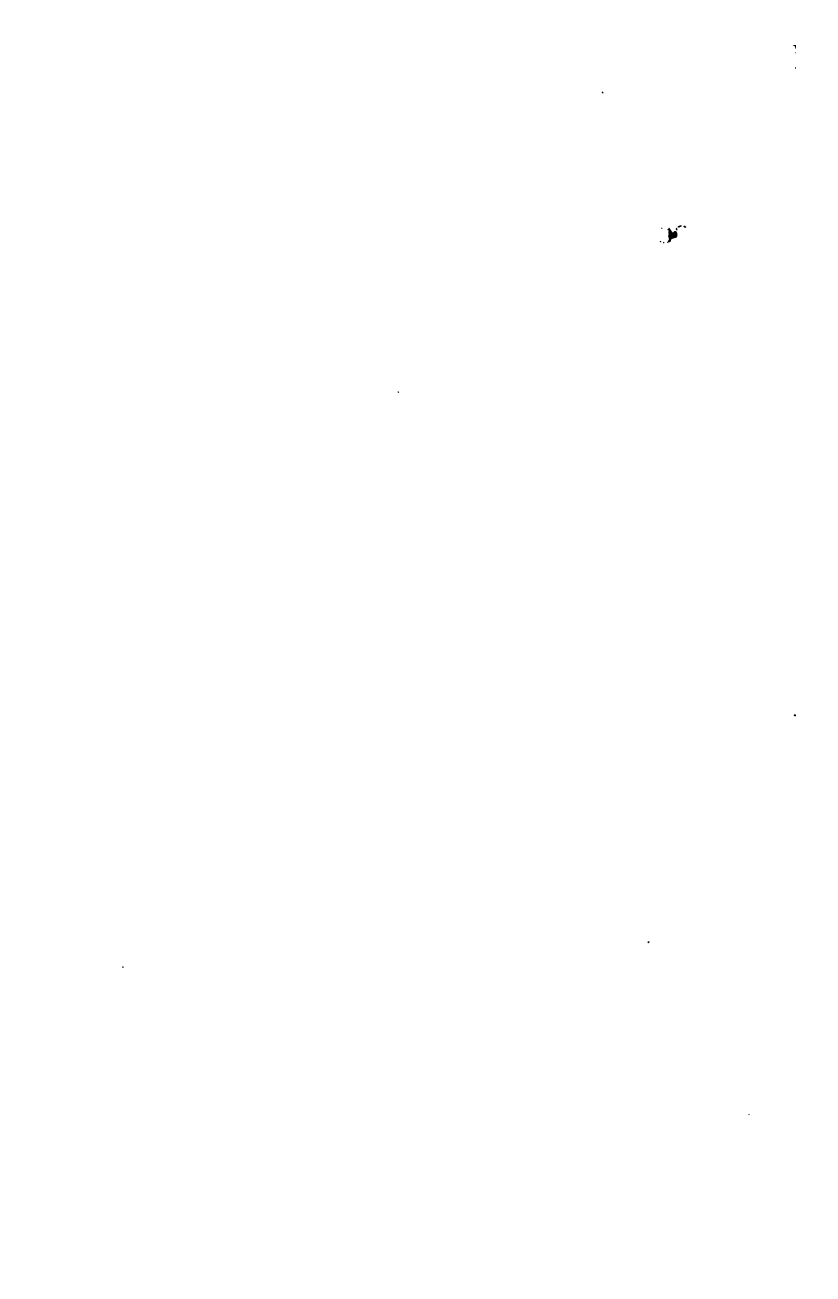
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WITH EVERY AFFECTIONATE DESIRE FOR

THEIR IMPROVEMENT,

BY

OCTAVIUS FREIRE OWEN.



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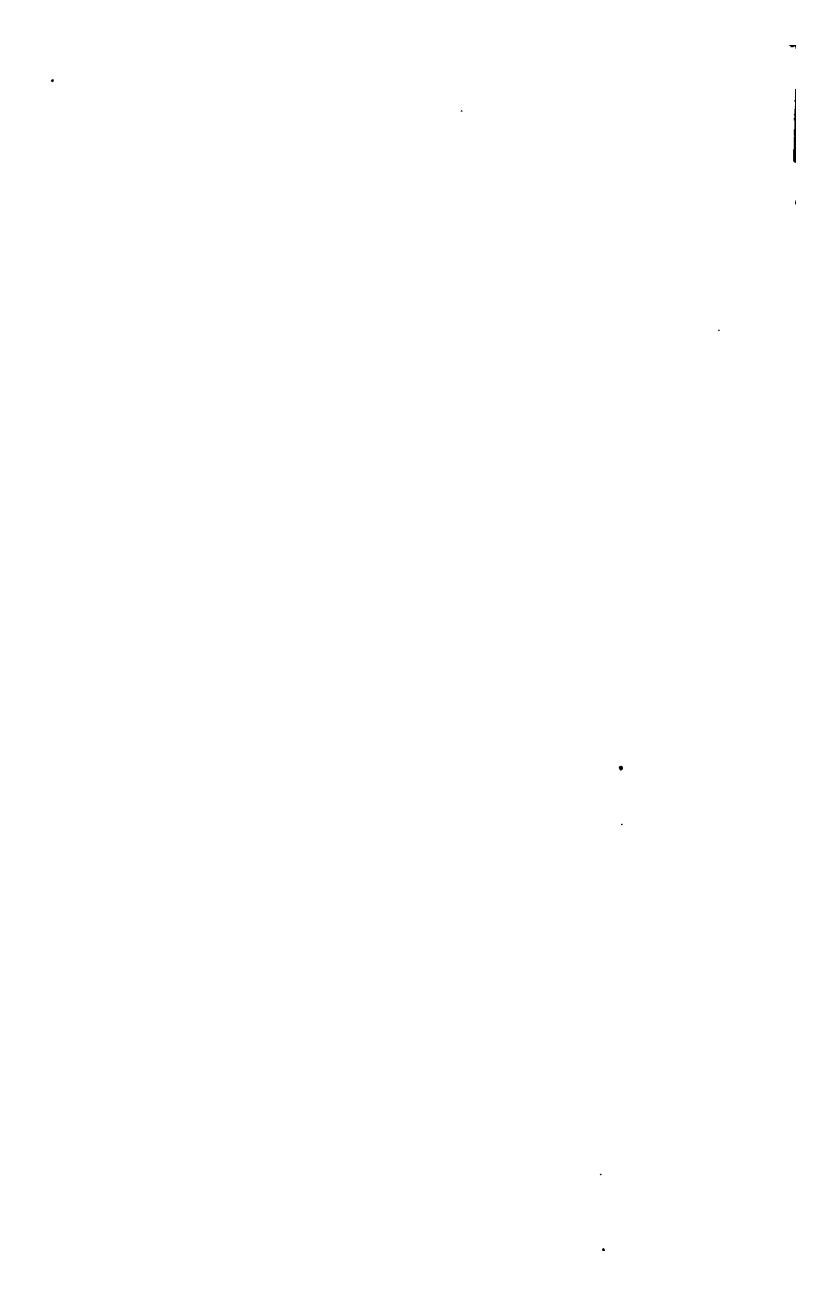
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PREFACE.

THE ear of self-love, too sensitive to bear the direct voice of truth, can tolerate only its reverberation, from a fable. Rebuke a courtier for his sycophancy, a lawyer for his cunning, a prelate for his pride, and he would shrink with disgust, evade with dexterity, or resent with indignation: yet the one, can censure the duplicity of the ape; the second, astutely impugn the fox; the third, sententially anathematize the peacock; until the moral, like a glass, presents to each original, the fabled personification of his own vice, and like an awkward swordsman, he suddenly finds himself wounded by the blow, beneath which he expected to prostrate his opponent.

The main object of fable, is to render the mind its own willing instructor, by gratifying self-esteem, in the opportunity afforded, for exercising the power of discovering truth, through the veil of allegory; instead of arousing disgust, by didactic application, which always offends our vanity, through placing us in the position of persons advised. Indeed, "the greatest parts," says Aristotle, "by which fable allures the soul, are the resolutions and discoveries," (Aristotle, Poet. c. 6;) and this is the reason why such writings, not only "afford much stronger proofs of genius, than mere narrative," since they require both judgment and imagination, but also why they should not be "too obvious, trite, nor trivial." (*Vide* Dodsley, Essay on Fable.) I do not pause now, to discuss the concomitants of such compositions, since they are amply elucidated in both the authors referred to; it is sufficient merely to allude to the manner in which I have endeavoured, in the present work, "to point a moral, and adorn a tale," and by rendering the mind's derivation of the former from the latter, more forcible, to corroborate the design of fable.

For this purpose, I have relied chiefly upon the

exercise of originality and common sense. We live in the days of literary veneer; the true Spanish mahogany, even the Honduras of originality, is nearly withered to the stump; nothing is said but what has been spoken before, whether it be, "I do not love thee, Dr. Fell," to be found in the "Non amo te," of Martial,—or the epigrams of a modern ironist, three or four of which, I discovered, the other day, in a volume of very old plays. The "points" of our best novels, are merely old friends in a new dress; the "tags" of our dramas, the airs of our overtures, are the odds and ends of ancient compositions; in fact, most of our literature resembles the restorations of dealers in mediæval furniture, wherein carved bits, old and new, are dove-tailed, pieced, and well varnished with antique colour, to form seats for modern fame to rest upon! In this epoch of plagiarism, happy is that jackdaw, who can find a feather of some former peacock, or a rag from the mantle of some bygone prophet, with which to cover his own literary bareness. Although, therefore, I have not hesitated to confirm my author by quotations from others, I have illustrated him chiefly from my own mind, have created, rather than copied: the biography, also, has been

compiled from the latest materials, some of which have been discovered since the death of Dr. Johnson.

One word as to the apparent satirical hardness of the notes. Sarcasm, it is true, is a peevish dog, kept in the house of Malevolence; but, nevertheless, Humanity is a thick-skinned animal, and its vanity so "films and gilds" its vice, as frequently to require for its cure the actual cautery; in fact, few of its follies can be removed, without the use of the knife. The notes have been written in rustic seclusion, where the mind, cut off from social affinities, and acting the spectator, rather than the player, looks more unimpassioned upon the game of life, and he who "in meditation lives," is likely to—

"Shape his weapon with an edge severe."

Yet to be candid, the satirist must first impugn himself, for his own heart presents the telescopic view, diminished but not wholly obliterated by self-love, of the shores and strands of evil he sees, "in extenso," around him; and he must confess that nature has made "the whole world, kin,"—marvellously of a pattern,—so that justice and thief, instructor and pupil, physician and patient, oneself and one's neighbour, are

only cuttings from the same piece ! Moreover, even when severe, satire is yet consistent with philanthropy ; the former is the stern rebuke applied by the latter, to hypocrisy ; and Socrates never evinced more clear perception of the heart's deceit, nor more friendly exertion to deliver his pupil from it, than when he rebuked Antisthenes for his affected asceticism, with, " I see thy vanity through the holes in thy coat." I may sincerely, indeed, say that my object in animadverting upon human infirmity, has not been to exalt myself, but to improve the great brotherhood of mankind.

With respect to historical associations, connected with certain localities mentioned in the Fables, the reader is referred to that truly valuable work, "Curiosities of London," written by my friend, J. Timbs, Esq., F.S.A., Editor of the Illustrated London News ; to whom I beg to offer my acknowledgments, for information relative to metropolitan antiquities.

O. F. O.

BURSTOW RECTORY, *July* 1854.

LIFE OF JOHN GAY.

THE Author of the following Fables is an example of the fickleness of fortune, and the independence of talent and position: descended from an old family, he inherited no ancestral wealth, and was a confirmed poet, though placed apprentice to a silk-mercier.

The manor of Goldworthy, in Devonshire, had long been in possession of his family, but its name does not appear in the Villare. The poet was however of Norman origin; his ancestor, Gilbert le Gay, gave name to a place called Hampton-Gay in Northamptonshire, and by marriage with the family of Curtoysé obtained possession of Goldworthy. The place of his birth was at Barnstaple;¹ the date of it 1688. His first instructor, Mr. Luck, probably fostered, though he could not create, a talent for the Muses in his pupil, (*"poeta nascitur non fit,"*) by a volume of Latin and English verses, which he published shortly before he retired from the superintendence of the school

(1) Since the publication of Johnson's biography of Gay, a singular discovery of a mass of MSS., concealed in a secret drawer in an easy-chair belonging to the poet, has led to the accurate knowledge of his birthplace having been Barnstaple. The reader will find a full account of this discovery, and of the papers, in a small volume in the British Museum, called *Gay's Chair*, with poems never before printed, from the MSS. of the Rev. Joseph Baller, his nephew, edited by Henry Lee, author of "*Caleb Quotem*." Hence, upon Baller's authority I have stated him to have been born at Barnstaple: Goldworthy is near Bideford.

at Barnstaple. When Gay quitted it, to be bound to a mercer's counter in London, we may judge of the irksomeness of his new position by his silence respecting it, and by the readiness with which his new master shortly discharged him.

3 | In 1712 he was enabled, by being appointed secretary to the Duchess of Monmouth, (an office which procured him more leisure,) to give a decided evidence of poetic wit and worldly wisdom, by inscribing a poem on 'Rural Sports,' to Mr. Pope, the rising sun of whose reputation called into life, with the usual tendency of expansive intellect, many kindred though less known aspirants for fame. Besides this work, and his articles in the 'Spectator' and 'Guardian,' the recommendation of a lively temper and genial disposition, not only laid the foundation of an enduring friendship between Pope and himself, but also at once obtained him admission into that intellectual circle, where his talents excited no envy from their predominance, and his amiability ensured regard.

4 | 'The Shepherd's Week,' published in the course of the succeeding year, was written, it is supposed, at Pope's suggestion, with a view of retorting upon a criticism by Steele in the 'Guardian' in favour of Ambrose Philips, who, to the disparagement of Pope, is named by the critic as the only successor, in that style, worthy to be named after Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. As the design was to show that to copy nature accurately, rusticity should be represented in all its ignorant grossness, the imitation by Gay in the Proem to the Pastorals is carried out in such a style of obsolete expression, as would at once have buried them in contempt, had not the evident endeavour at truth elicited approval. 'The Wife

of Bath,' a comedy brought upon the stage in 1713, was unfortunate throughout, for as it obtained no favour at its first production, so seventeen years afterwards, when the 'Beggar's Opera' had achieved universal renown, it was doomed to reiterated rejection.

With the death of Queen Anne, Gay, who had been appointed secretary to Lord Clarendon in his embassy to Hanover, saw his anticipations of patronage decline, for in Swift's opinion the dedication of his 'Shepherd's Week' to Bolingbroke, had lost him the favour of the Hanoverian family. Still, at this period of his career his spirits seem to have been more firm against disappointment, for he wrote a poem upon the arrival of the Princess of Wales, and reaped the reward of perseverance so far that, "both the Prince and Princess went to see his 'What d' ye call it?' a kind of mock tragedy, in which the images were comic and the action grave; so that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwell, who could not hear what was said, was at a loss how to reconcile the laughter of the audience with the solemnity of the scene."¹ The popularity of this piece aroused envy, and a reply was written to it by Mr. Theobald and Griffin (a player), entitled "The Key to the What d' ye call it?" which Gay declared "called him a block-head and Mr. Pope a knave." His expectations that the success of this burlesque would assist his promotion, proving illusory, he, with the ready depression of a weak man, fell from hope to despondency, so that had it not been for the attention of Lord Burlington, Mr. Pulteney, and Lord Harcourt, he would never have been able to endure a fresh rebuff, which most deservedly befel him in 1717. Having endeavoured in 'Three Hours after Marriage' to burlesque Dr. Woodward, a geologist of estimable character,

: (1) Johnson.

the comedy, a joint production of Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, so disgusted the audience in the scene where Woodward was ridiculed palpably, by the introduction of a crocodile and a mummy, that it was hissed off with well-merited censure, and inflicted public disgrace upon its authors.

Unaccustomed to the use of wealth, the possession of a thousand pounds, the product of the publication of his poems by subscription, was an event equally beyond his prudence or his equanimity. Distrustful of the former, he called in, as his financial advisers, Lewis, who counselled him to live upon the interest and intrust it to the funds ; Arbuthnot, who advised him to live on the principal and trust it to God ; Pope and Swift, who told him to purchase an annuity. On the other hand his equanimity was soon banished, when Craggs presented him with some South Sea Stock, and he dreamed of visions of twenty thousand pounds ; but fearful of obstructing his own fortune, he disregarded the advice of Fenton to purchase an annuity, which, as he said, " would make him sure of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day," so that when the bubble burst, and the substance dwindled to the shadow, poor Gay's life almost sank beneath the sudden transition from fancied wealth to real penury.

It is the delight of fortune to mock, with capricious absurdity, the efforts of men to rise above her power, and comicality frequently attends the introduction of life's most important events. Upon one occasion Gay, who had written a tragedy called 'The Captives,' was commanded to read before the Princess of Wales. A large japan screen was placed near him, which he not observing, threw down in his respectful advances towards the august party, reverence for whom completely absorbed the atten-

tion of a poet's mind, usually incapable of more than one idea at a time ; the Princess and her ladies screamed so violently as entirely to discomfit our author, who was nevertheless still expected to read his play. It was afterwards acted seven nights, the author's third night being by command of their Royal Highnesses, and though its subsequent fate is little known, it had the effect of rousing Gay from indolence, by inspiring him with the idea that he still possessed Court favour. Under this impression he undertook, in 1726, to write a volume of Fables for the young Duke of Cumberland, and had already magnified the promised reward "with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity." But when the Prince and Princess became King and Queen, and he found all his hopes contracted into the paltry appointment of Gentleman Usher to the Princess Louisa, his disgust became intolerable, and finding that verses and supplications, flattery and remonstrance, were equally unavailing, he appears to have concentrated his wrath in the vehement tirade against Courts with which his Fables and other works abound, until he partially forgot it in the signal success attending his Beggar's Opera.

This remarkable production was composed in ridicule of the Italian Drama ; Cibber rejected it at Drury Lane, but Rich having accepted it, it rendered, as a wit observed, "*Gay rich and Rich gay.*" It was framed upon a suggestion of Swift, who remarked one day to the poet what an odd, pretty sort of thing a Newgate Pastoral would make. Gay improved upon this original notion, and determined to compose a comedy upon it. It has been variously criticised as to its effect upon morals, Swift upholding, Dr. Herring, Archbishop of Canterbury, censuring it, and many asserting that since its production robbery increased.

Johnson's opinion seems hardly given with his usual judgment, for whilst stating that it is not likely to do good, he yet thinks that it cannot produce evil, because highwaymen, &c. do not frequent the playhouses. This is fallacious, for there is no production which does not have a tendency of some sort, and therefore cannot be neutral towards the induction of good or evil into the mind; next, the spectacle of crime under circumstances which rob it of its turpitude, and invest it with pseudo-heroism, warps the judgment from its true decision, and recommends vice under the garb of nobility; and lastly, not only in our day, but in Johnson's, the most degraded culprits have had their scenic tastes, which they gratify by attendance at theatrical exhibitions. Moreover such spectacles are not so pernicious in the effect they produce upon those who are thieves already, as from their tendency to induce the honest and upright to degenerate. The Lord Chamberlain seems to have been of this opinion, for, notwithstanding the astounding success of the 'Beggar's Opera,' he prohibited the appearance of the second part, entitled 'Polly,' which "oppression," as Gay called it, turned out profitable, for he recompensed himself by a subscription, which nearly tripled the amount of the first part; the Opera realizing £400, and the second part obtaining almost £1200.

His latter life was passed in the house of the Duke of Queensberry, who so entirely accommodated himself to the humour, or frailty, of his guest, as in some sort to become his steward, managing his money, and giving it to him as he wanted it; so true is it that the weakness of amiability elicits more regard, than the independence of consummate intellect. Yet notwithstanding the attention of his friend, the venom of disappointment rankled within his breast, and his life was rendered gloomy by the

realization of that court treachery which, experience might have taught him to expect, or religion to despise.

He died on the 4th December, 1732, aged 44, having been hurried out of existence with more precipitancy than Arbuthnot states he ever knew, by a return of his old malady, a colic, and was buried in Westminster Abbey,—a recompense which this nation generally extends to its talented men, for having neglected them during their lives! In England, we bury genius superbly; in France, they maintain it. He left £6000 (not £3000 as Johnson says), which sum was divided between his two sisters, Katherine Baller and Joanna Fortescue. Swift, who had greater affection for Gay than he probably felt for any man, was so impressed with a foreboding of some misfortune, as to leave the letter containing the intelligence of the poet's death for some days unread, and even that rugged nature was not above practising the common self-deception with which we sometimes cheat ourselves of the full bitterness of sorrow, by mixing it with our courage, —*drop by drop!*

The great merit attached to Gay on the score of originality, consists in his having been the first to bring out the Ballad Opera, and thereby to have hit the public taste by a species of composition appropriate, if not elevated. Indeed the general character of his intellect, like that of his disposition, seems to have been of a moderate temper, in which correctness took the medium place between genius and tenuity. Pope describes him as a natural man, without design, who spoke what he thought, and just as he thought it; of a timid temper, and fearful of giving offence to the great, which latter habit, he says, "was of no avail;" he might have added, neither will it ever succeed, since the world, to be managed properly, must, as Charles the Fifth

observed, feel "the iron hand in the silk glove." In Gay it is certain, we discover none of those faults which

———"Lofty genius owes
Half to the ardour which itself bestows:—"

his policy lay in the natural exercise of his disposition which was so plastic as readily to succumb to others, in contented servility.

His Fables, always a favourite work, promise to continue so, abroad as at home, for a translation of them into French by the Chevalier de Chatelain has already been received with approbation, and they have been rendered into Urdic and Bengali poetry. Johnson remarks that Gay seems to confound the strict fable with "tales" and "allegorical prosopopœias," and that from some of them it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. La Fontaine also states that in the true fable none but animal are admitted, and quotes Aristotle's authority for excluding trees; but we may notice that the Stagirite in his definition, extends the idea of fable widely, when he calls it "an imitation of action;" and not only Æsop, whom he refers to as the great fabulist, introduces plants and trees often, but the most ancient fable extant, that of Jotham, is framed upon them. After Gay's death, a second volume of Fables, more political in character, and also some other pieces, as "The Comedy of the Distressed Wife," "The Rehearsal at Gotham," &c. appeared, but these last will not sustain his reputation, either on the score of judgment or originality; the Fables are throughout distinguished by smoothness of versification, and a style of expression easy and apposite.

The epitaph he proposed for himself,

"Life's a jest, and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it"—

(1) About B.C. 1209. Vide Judges, c. ix.

is the flippant tribute of folly to irreligion. His friends, "Charles and Catherine, Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, who loved this excellent person living and regretted him dead, caused a monument to be erected to his memory," upon which Pope wrote the following lines, in all the fulsome fervour of poetic hyperbole:—

“Of manners gentle, of affections mild,
In wit a man, simplicity a child,
With Nature's humour, temp'ring virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once, and lash the age;
Above temptation in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, ev'n among the great;
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblamed through life, lamented in thy end—
These are thine honours, not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust,
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms,—here lies Gay.”



INTRODUCTION.



SHEPHERD AND THE PHILOSOPHER.

REMOTE from cities lived a Swain,
Unvex'd with all the cares of gain ;
His head was silver'd o'er with age,
And long experience made him sage ;
In summer's heat and winter's cold
He fed his flock and penn'd the fold :

His hours in cheerful labour flew,
 Nor envy nor ambition knew :
 His wisdom and his honest fame
 Through all the country raised his name.¹

A deep Philosopher (whose rules
 Of moral life were drawn from schools)
 The Shepherd's homely cottage sought,
 And thus explored his reach of thought :

"Whence is thy learning? hath thy toil
 O'er books consumed the midnight oil?
 Hast thou old Greece and Rome survey'd,
 And the vast sense of Plato weigh'd?
 Hath Socrates thy soul refined,
 And hast thou fathom'd Tully's mind?
 Or, like the wise Ulysses, thrown,
 By various fates, on realms unknown,
 Hast thou through many cities stray'd,
 Their customs, laws, and manners weigh'd?"

The Shepherd modestly replied,—
 "I ne'er the paths of learning tried ;
 Nor have I roam'd in foreign parts
 To read mankind, their laws and arts ;
 For man is practised in disguise,
 He cheats the most discerning eyes :
 Who by that search shall wiser grow,
 When we OURSELVES can never know?²
 The little knowledge I have gain'd,
 Was all from simple Nature drain'd ;

(1) The retirement of the country has ever formed a fertile theme of praise to poets, but it depends upon the disposition to derive good from it,—

"Cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt."—HOR.

(2) "The noblest study of mankind is man."—POPE.

Yet Socrates himself confessed that, after all, so far was he from realizing the saying of Thales, "Know thyself," that "he only knew that he knew nothing." For rules of self-knowledge see Addison, *Spectator*, No. 399.

Hence my life's maxims took their rise,
Hence grew my settled hate to vice.

“The daily labours of the bee
Awake my soul to industry.
Who can observe the careful ant
And not provide for future want?¹
My dog (the trustiest of his kind)
With gratitude inflames my mind:
I mark his true, his faithful way,
And in my service copy Tray.
In constancy and nuptial love,
I learn my duty from the dove.
The hen, who from the chilly air,
With pious wing, protects her care,
And every fowl that flies at large,
Instructs me in a parent's charge.²

“From Nature, too, I take my rule,
To shun contempt and ridicule.
I never, with important air,
In conversation overbear.
Can grave and formal pass for wise,
When men the solemn owl despise?
My tongue within my lips I rein,
For who talks much, must talk in vain.
We from the wordy torrent fly;
Who listens to the chattering pye?
Nor would I, with felonious sleight,
By stealth invade my neighbour's right.
Rapacious animals we hate;
Kites, hawks, and wolves, deserve their fate.
Do not we just abhorrence find
Against the toad and serpent kind?

(1) Vide Prov. v. 6.

(2) For the most beautiful application of this image, see Luke xiii. 34.

But Envy, Calumny, and Spite,
 Bear stronger venom in their bite.¹
 Thus every object of creation
 Can furnish hints to contemplation,
 And from the most minute and mean,
 A virtuous mind can morals glean."
 "Thy fame is just," the Sage replies,
 "Thy virtue proves thee truly wise.
 Pride often guides the author's pen;
 Books as affected are as men:
 But he who studies Nature's laws,
 From certain truth his maxims draws;
 And those, without our schools, suffice
 To make men moral, good and wise."²

(1) Because, says Swift,—

———"Now and then
 Beasts may degenerate into men."

(2) In addition to Revelation, God has left us two records of His nature, and our duty: one internal, conscience; the other external, the aspect of all created things. Hence proper observation and thought upon the different phases of creative economy, constitute an element, and a most material one, of moral discipline, and it was well said by the wise Italian bishop, that he learned patience by the right use of his eyes. "For," said he, "I first look up to Heaven and remember that all my business is to get there: next I look to earth, and call to mind how small a portion I shall require of it when dead: lastly, I look into the world, and see how many there are, more miserable than myself. Thus I learn where true happiness is placed, where all our cares must end, and what little reason I have to repine."

But retirement has its abuses, as well as contemplation its benefits: rural apathy is not reflection, nor can there be a greater waste than for vast talents to be doomed to rust, in vulgar solitude. There are who mistake the process for the result, and who in the vain affectation of philosophical abstinence from society, go, as Eve did, to meet the devil in private. Wholesome activity of mind and body, sufficient to employ both, in the service of God and man, comports best with the design of the Creator, and therefore with the happiness of the creature. Otherwise, to shut the door, will not shut out temptation, but solitude will echo to the discontented repinings of an aimless existence, or to the perturbed pleadings of ill-suppressed desires. "Possessing all I want," said Rasselas, "I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is still more tedious than the former;" and the hermit in the same work, though he had lived fifteen years in solitude, had "no desire that his example should gain any imitators." The stagnant pool breeds reptiles, and chaos is twin-born with darkness and confusion,—the moral world, in this respect as in others, bears se resemblance to the physical'



THE LION, THE TIGER, AND THE TRAVELLER.

ACCEPT, young Prince! the moral lay,
And in these Tales mankind survey;
With early virtues plant your breast,
The specious arts of vice detest.

Princes, like beauties, from their youth
Are strangers to the voice of Truth.¹

(1) Compare the third Satire of Juvenal. There is one exception, namely, they hear truth when it is profitable to the courtier to tell it, but never the whole truth.

Learn to condemn all praise betimes,
 For flattery's the nurse of crimes :
 Friendship by sweet reproof is shown ;
 (A virtue never near a throne ;)
 In courts such freedom must offend ;
 There, none presumes to be a friend.¹
 To those of your exalted station,
 Each courtier is a dedication.
 Must I, too, flatter like the rest,
 And turn my morals to a jest ?
 The Muse disdains to steal from those
 Who thrive in courts by fulsome prose.

But shall I hide your real praise,
 Or tell you what a nation says ?—
 They in your infant bosom trace
 The virtues of your royal race ;
 In the fair dawning of your mind
 Discern you generous, mild, and kind :
 They see you grieve to hear distress,
 And pant already to redress.
 Go on ; the height of good attain,
 Nor let a nation hope in vain :
 For hence we justly may presage
 The virtues of a riper age.
 True courage shall your bosom fire,
 And future actions own your sire.
 Cowards are cruel, but the brave
 Love mercy, and delight to save.²

(1)

——“Nothing misbecomes

The man that would be thought a friend, like flattery.”—Rowe.

Vide also Shakspear, *King Lear*, Act iv. Sc. 6.

(2) The old habit is too strong for eradication ; Gay falls into the language of courts, just after he had repudiated it. The Portuguese have a quaint but true proverb, “An old ass will never learn a new language.”

A Tiger, roaming for his prey,
Sprung on a Traveller in the way ;
The prostrate game a Lion spies,
And on the greedy tyrant flies :
With mingled roar resounds the wood,
Their teeth, their claws, distil with blood .
Till, vanquish'd by the Lion's strength,
The spotted foe extends his length.
The Man besought the shaggy lord,
And on his knees for life implored :
His life the generous hero gave.
Together walking to his cave,
The Lion thus bespoke his guest :

“What hardy beast shall dare contest
My matchless strength? you saw the fight,
And must attest my power and right.
Forced to forego their native home,
My starving slaves at distance roam
Within these woods I reign alone ;
The boundless forest is my own.
Bears, wolves, and all the savage brood,
Have dyed the regal den with blood.
These carcasses on either hand,
Those bones that whiten all the land,
My former deeds and triumphs tell,
Beneath these jaws what numbers fell.”

“True,” says the man, “the strength I saw
Might well the brutal nation awe ;
But shall a monarch, brave, like you,
Place glory in so false a view?
Robbers invade their neighbour's right :
Be loved ; let justice bound your might.

Mean are ambitious heroes' boasts
 Of wasted lands, and slaughter'd hosts :
 Pirates their power by murders gain ;
 Wise kings by love and mercy reign.¹
 To me your clemency hath shown
 The virtue worthy of a throne.
 Heav'n gives you power above the rest,
 Like Heav'n, to succour the distress."

"The case is plain," the monarch said,
 "False glory hath my youth misled ;
 For beasts of prey, a servile train,
 Have been the flatterers of my reign.
 You reason well: yet tell me, friend,
 Did ever you in courts attend ?
 For all my fawning rogues agree,
 That human heroes rule like me."²

(1) In the treatise of Xenophon entitled "Hiero, or the Condition of Kings," set forth by Montaigne in his *Essays*, the reader will find a faithful exposition of the miserable condition of princes, especially in their being deprived of friendship, and the true object of action. Their real pleasure should be in bestowing good, for true greatness ought to resemble the sun, in that the higher it rises, the further it disperses light and joy. The history of the world, however, unfortunately corroborates the truth of the lion's remark, and the sceptres of few princes have borne the emblem of the dove. The last words of Charles the Fifth, of France, ought to form the motto of every prince:—"Frenchmen who now hear me, I address myself to the Supreme Being and to you! I find that kings are happy but in this—that they have the power of doing good."

(2) Vide Shakspear, *Merchant of Venice*, Act iv. Sc. 1.





THE SPANIEL AND THE CHAMELEON.

A SPANIEL, bred with all the care
That waits upon a favourite heir,
Ne'er felt correction's rigid hand ;
Indulged to disobey command,
In pamper'd ease his hours were spent :
He never knew what learning meant.
Such forward airs, so pert, so smart,
Were sure to win his lady's heart ;

Each little mischief gain'd him praise ;
How pretty were his fawning ways !

The wind was south, the morning fair,
He ventures forth to take the air :
He ranges all the meadow round,
And rolls upon the softest ground ;
When near him a Chameleon seen,
Was scarce distinguish'd from the green.

" Dear emblem of the flattering host !
What, live with clowns ! a genius lost !
To cities and the court repair ;
A fortune cannot fail thee there :
Preferment shall thy talents crown ;
Believe me, friend ; I know the town."

" Sir," says the sycophant, " like you,
Of old, politer life I knew :
Like you, a courtier born and bred,
Kings lean'd their ear to what I said :
My whisper always met success ;
The ladies praised me for address :
I knew to hit each courtier's passion,
And flatter'd every vice in fashion :
But Jove, who hates the liar's ways,
At once cut short my prosperous days,
And, sentenced to retain my nature,
Transform'd me to this crawling creature.
Doom'd to a life obscure and mean,
I wander in the silvan scene :
For Jove the heart alone regards ;
He punishes what man rewards.—¹

(1) Compare 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

How different is thy case and mine?
 With men at least you sup and dine;
 While I, condemn'd to thinnest fare,
 Like those I flatter'd, feed on air."¹

(1) The raillery at court sycophants naturally pervades our poet's writings, who had suffered so much from them: here, however, he intimates something more, namely, the apposite dispensations to men's acts, even in this world. The crafty is taken in his own guile, the courtier falls by his own arts, and the ladder of ambition only prepares for the aspirant a further fall.

———"Unde altior esset
 Casus, et impulsæ præceps immane ruinæ."—*Juvenal*.





THE MOTHER, THE NURSE, AND THE FAIRY.

“GIVE me a son!”—The blessing sent,
Were ever parents more content?
How partial are their dotting eyes!
No child is half so fair and wise.¹

Wak'd to the morning's pleasing care,
The Mother rose, and sought her heir:
She saw the Nurse like one possest,
With wringing hands and sobbing breast.

(1) “I never yet saw that father who, let his son be never so decrepit or scald-pated, would not own him: not but that, unless he were totally besotted and blinded with his paternal affection, he does not well enough discern his defects, but because, notwithstanding all his faults, he is still his.”—MONTAIGNE.

"Sure some disaster has befall :
Speak, Nurse ; I hope the boy is well."
"Dear Madam, think not me to blame ;
Invisible the Fairy came :
Your precious babe is hence convey'd,
And in the place a changeling laid.
Where are the father's mouth and nose ?
The mother's eyes, as black as sloes ?
See, here, a shocking awkward creature,
That speaks a fool in every feature."
"The woman's blind," the Mother cries,
"I see wit sparkle in his eyes."

"Lord, Madam, what a squinting leer !
No doubt the Fairy hath been here."

Just as she spoke, a pigmy sprite
Pops through the keyhole swift as light ;
Perch'd on the cradle's top she stands,
And thus her folly reprimands.

"Whence sprung the vain conceited lie,
That we the world with fools supply ?
What ! give our sprightly race away
For the dull helpless sons of clay !—
Besides, by partial fondness shown,
Like you, we dote upon our own.
Where yet was ever found a Mother
Who'd give her booby for another ?
And should we change with human breed,
Well might we pass for fools indeed."¹

(1) The application of this fable is two-fold ; for whilst it slightly touches, by inference, the shortsightedness of human wishes, it also alludes to the false judgment which parental fondness forms, of juvenile error. The severe sarcasm passed by the fairy upon mortal infirmity, is as true, as the readiness with which we allow a reason to operate in our own case, and forbid it in another's, is frequent. Johnson's famous paraphrase upon the tenth Satire of Juvenal, is very concurrent with this fable.



THE EAGLE AND ASSEMBLY OF ANIMALS.

As Jupiter's all-seeing eye
Survey'd the worlds beneath the sky;
From this small speck of earth were sent
Murmurs and sounds of discontent;
For every thing alive complain'd
That he the hardest life sustain'd.¹

Jove calls his eagle. At the word
Before him stands the royal bird.

(1) "The greatest portion of religious service which Heaven receives," says Swift, "and the sincerest act of our devotion is—complaint."

The bird, obedient, from heaven's height,¹
Downward directs his rapid flight ;
Then cited every living thing
To hear the mandates of his king.

"Ungrateful creatures! whence arise
These murmurs which offend the skies ;
Why this disorder? say the cause ;
For just are Jove's eternal laws.
Let each his discontent reveal ;
To yon sour Dog I first appeal."

"Hard is my lot," the Hound replies,
"On what fleet nerves the Greyhound flies ;
While I, with weary step and slow,
O'er plains, and vales, and mountains go.
The morning sees my chase begun,
Nor ends it till the setting sun."

"When," says the Greyhound, "I pursue,
My game is lost, or caught in view ;
Beyond my sight the prey's secure ;
The hound is slow, but always sure ;
And had I his sagacious scent,
Jove ne'er had heard my discontent."

The Lion craved the Fox's art ;
The Fox the Lion's force and heart :
The Cock implored the Pigeon's flight,
Whose wings were rapid, strong, and light ;
The Pigeon strength of wing despised,
And the Cock's matchless valour prized :
The Fishes wished to graze the plain,
The Beasts to skim beneath the main :
Thus, envious of another's state,
Each blamed the partial hand of Fate.

(1) This is a bad line, and forms an exception to Gay's usual accuracy.

The Bird of Heaven¹ then cried aloud,
 "Jove bids disperse the murmuring crowd;
 The god rejects your idle prayers.
 Would ye, rebellious mutineers!
 Entirely change your name and nature,
 And be the very envied creature?—
 What, silent all, and none consent?
 Be happy, then, and learn content;
 Nor imitate the restless mind,
 And proud ambition, of mankind."²



(1)

"Jovis ales."—VIRGIL.

(2) Perfect good being unattainable, each man's position would be rendered pleasant, or at least tolerable to him, were he to consider, (which he does not,) the infelicities, rather than the apparent enjoyments, of another. The rich envies the poor man's healthy relish of food, let him set against it the latter's constrained self-denial: the pauper craves wealth, instead of contemplating the cares it brings with it. There is a crook in each lot, a sore place in every man's heart; God hath set one thing against the other in all conditions, so that the hardest fate has never yet been found. Were there a window in every one's breast, how often would clouds appear in the lot we consider brightest! how few beggars would then be content to exchange their condition with the wealthiest, without a pause! "Sorte tuâ contentus abi," is a panacea for most ills.



THE WILD BOAR AND THE RAM.

AGAINST an elm a sheep was tied,
The butcher's knife in blood was dyed ;
The patient flock, in silent fright,
From far beheld the horrid sight :
A savage Boar, who near them stood,
Thus mock'd to scorn the fleecy brood.

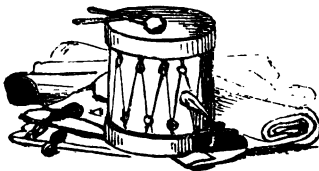
“ All cowards should be served like you.
See, see, your murderer is in view :
With purple hands, and reeking knife,
He strips the skin yet warm with life.

Your quarter'd sires, your bleeding dams,
The dying bleat of harmless lambs,
Call for revenge. O stupid race!
The heart that wants revenge is base."¹

"I grant," an ancient Ram replies,
"We bear no terror in our eyes;
Yet think us not of soul so tame,
Which no repeated wrongs inflame;
Insensible of every ill,
Because we want thy tusks to kill.
Know, those who violence pursue,
Give to themselves the vengeance due;
For in these massacres they find
The two chief plagues that waste mankind.
Our skin supplies the wrangling bar,
It wakes their slumbering sons to war;
And well revenge may rest contented,
Since drums and parchment were invented."²

- (1) ——— "Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils."—MILTON.

(2) Patient forbearance under injury is a distinctive trait of true humility, and, it may be said, of wisdom also; since if we leave tyranny to work its way, the end shows that its greatest victim will be itself. Man is not so fearful in his cruelty to the brutes, as he is in his animosity to his fellow, and greater curses have never befallen the world, than litigious strife, under the plea of justice, and war and rapine under the name of glory. Can any intellect comprehend the vast amount of cruelty, lust, and malice, let loose in a campaign, or of injustice, perjury, and fraud, tied up in a piece of red tape?





THE MISER AND PLUTUS.

THE wind was high, the window shakes,
With sudden start the Miser wakes ;
Along the silent room he stalks,
Looks back, and trembles as he walks.
Each lock and every bolt he tries,
In every creek and corner pries ;
Then opes the chest with treasure stored,
And stands in rapture o'er his hoard :¹

- (1) "At midnight thus th' Usurer steals untrack'd
To make a visit to his hoarded gold,
And feast his eyes upon the shining mammon."—**OTWAY.**

But now with sudden qualms possess,
 He wrings his hands, he beats his breast ;
 By conscience stung he wildly stares,
 And thus his guilty soul declares :

“ Had the deep earth her stores confined,
 This heart had known sweet peace of mind.
 But virtue's sold. Good gods! what price
 Can recompense the pangs of vice !
 O bane of good! seducing cheat!
 Can man, weak man, thy power defeat?
 Gold banish'd honour from the mind, .
 And only left the name behind ;
 Gold sow'd the world with every ill ;
 Gold taught the murderer's sword to kill :
 'Twas gold instructed coward hearts
 In treachery's more pernicious arts.
 Who can recount the mischiefs o'er?¹
 Virtue resides on earth no more!”—
 He spoke, and sigh'd.—In angry mood
 Plutus, his god, before him stood.
 The Miser, trembling, lock'd his chest ;
 The Vision frown'd, and thus address'd :—
 “ Whence is this vile ungrateful rant,
 Each sordid rascal's daily cant?
 Did I, base wretch! corrupt mankind?—
 The fault's in thy rapacious mind.
 Because my blessings are abused,
 Must I be censured, cursed, accused?

(1) “ This yellow slave
 Will knit and break religions; bless th' accurs'd:
 Make the hoar leprosy ador'd; place thieves,
 And give them title, knee, and approbation,
 With senators on the bench.”—SHAKESPEARE, *Timon of Athens*.

Ev'n virtue's self by knaves is made
 A cloak to carry on the trade;
 And power (when lodged in their possession)
 Grows tyranny, and rank oppression.
 Thus, when the villain crams his chest,
 Gold is the canker of the breast;
 'Tis avarice, insolence, and pride,
 And every shocking vice beside;
 But when to virtuous hands 'tis given,
 It blesses, like the dews of Heaven;
 Like Heaven, it hears the orphan's cries,
 And wipes the tears from widows' eyes.
 Their crimes on gold shall misers lay,
 Who pawn'd their sordid souls for pay?
 Let bravos, then, when blood is spilt,
 Upbraid the passive sword with guilt."¹

(1) There is no man so ignorant who cannot frame an excuse for the sin that he loves. Riches, if properly employed, are a blessing; if abused, are a curse: in fact, in proportion as they are faithfully dispensed, they increase, and the good steward is entrusted with more. A rich merchant who had lost 1,500*l.* immediately distributed 100*l.* among poor ministers and people. "For," said he, "if my fortune is going by 1,500*l.* in a lump, it is high time to secure some part of it before it is gone." Contrast the wretched state of the miser Elwes, who would not have his shoes cleaned for fear of wearing them out; of his mother, who starved herself to death when worth 100,000*l.*; of Marlborough, who to save sixpence (when he possessed a million and a half), walked, at the last stage of life, in a cold night, to his lodgings; with the benevolence of Colston, the Bristol merchant, or of Dr. Warneford, or Jenny Lind in our day,—and who would blame fortune, and not man's nature? One of the most affecting incidents in the life of Louis XVI. occurred during the mock trial which preceded his judicial murder. He was asked what he had done with a few thousand pounds. His voice failed him, the tears came into his eyes, and he touchingly said, "I had pleasure in making other people happy!"—He had given the money away in charity.





THE LION, THE FOX, AND THE GEESE.

A LION, tired with state affairs,
Quite sick of pomp, and worn with cares,
Resolv'd (remote from noise and strife)
In peace to pass his latter life.¹

It was proclaim'd; the day was set:—
Behold the general council met.

(1) The indolence of increasing years is frequently mistaken for resignation, and the apathy of age often passes for the self-denial of philosophy. Men conceal the real nature of vice and virtue, as they do the powers of certain half-known drugs—*by fine names*.

The Fox was viceroy named ; the crowd
To the new regent humbly bow'd.
Wolves, bears, and mighty tigers bend,
And strive who most shall condescend.
He straight assumes a solemn grace,
Collects his wisdom in his face :
The crowd admire his wit, his sense ;
Each word hath weight and consequence.
The flatterer all his art displays :
He who hath power is sure of praise !
A Fox stept forth before the rest,
And thus the servile throng address :

“ How vast his talents, born to rule,
And train'd in Virtue's honest school !
What clemency his temper sways !
How uncorrupt are all his ways !
Beneath his conduct and command
Rapine shall cease to waste the land.
His brain hath stratagem and art ;
Prudence and mercy rule his heart.
What blessings must attend the nation
Under this good administration !”

He said. A Goose, who distant stood,
Harangued apart the cackling brood :

“ Whene'er I hear a knave commend,
He bids me shun his worthy friend.
What praise, what mighty commendation !
But 'twas a Fox who spoke th' oration.
Foxes this government may prize
As gentle, plentiful, and wise ;
If they enjoy the sweets, 'tis plain
We Geese must feel a tyrant-reign.

What havoc now shall thin our race,
 When every petty clerk in place,
 To prove his taste, and seem polite,
 Will feed on Geese both noon and night!"¹

(1) The observation of Lear admirably portrays the sycophancy of satellites to men in power:—

"*Lear.* Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glo. Ay, Sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office!"

The real moral, however, is, that those praise the thief who share in the spoil, and that in flattering the vices of a Tiberius, a Sejanus ensures the gratification of his own. Thus it was with Empson and Dudley, the ministers to Henry the Seventh's cupidity.





THE LADY AND THE WASP.

WHAT whispers must the Beauty bear!
What hourly nonsense haunts her ear!
Where'er her eyes dispense their charms,
Impertinence around her swarms.
Did not the tender nonsense strike,
Contempt and scorn might look dislike;
Forbidding airs might thin the place,
The slightest flap a fly can chase:
But who can drive the num'rous breed?—
Chase one, another will succeed.



THE BULL AND THE MASTIFF.

SEEK you to train your favourite boy?
Each caution, every care employ;
And ere you venture to confide,
Let his preceptor's heart be tried:
Weigh well his manners, life, and scope;
On these depends thy future hope.

As on a time, in peaceful reign,
A Bull enjoy'd the flowery plain,
A Mastiff pass'd; inflamed with ire,
His eyeballs shot indignant fire;
He foam'd, he raged with thirst of blood,—
—Spurning the ground, the monarch stood,

And roar'd aloud: "Suspend the fight;
 In a whole skin go sleep to-night;
 Or tell me, ere the battle rage,
 What wrongs provoke thee to engage?
 Is it ambition fires thy breast,
 Or avarice, that ne'er can rest?
 From these alone unjustly springs
 The world-destroying wrath of kings."

The surly Mastiff thus returns:
 "Within my bosom, glory burns.
 Like heroes of eternal name,
 Whom poets sing, I fight for fame.
 The butcher's spirit-stirring mind
 To daily war my youth inclined;
 He train'd me to heroic deed,
 Taught me to conquer or to bleed."

"Curs'd Dog," the Bull replied, "no more
 I wonder at thy thirst of gore;
 For thou beneath a butcher train'd,
 Whose hands with cruelty are stain'd,
 His daily murders in thy view
 Must, like thy tutor, blood pursue.
 Take, then, thy fate!" With goring wound
 At once he lifts him from the ground:
 Aloft the sprawling hero flies,
 Mangled he falls, he howls, and dies.¹

(1) The following lines from Dryden's translation of Juvenal, illustrate the application of the above fable:

"Children like tender osiers take the bow,
 And as they first are fashion'd, always grow,
 For what we learn in youth, to that alone
 In age, we are by second nature, prone."

It is similar to the fable in *Æsop*, where the man about to be executed for a crime, bites his mother's ear off, when pretending to kiss her, because she had not corrected him for a theft when a boy. Compare also *Aristotle's Ethics*, book ii. *Cowper's Tirocinium*, and *Montaigne's Essays*, ch. 25.



THE ELEPHANT AND THE BOOKSELLER.

THE man who with undaunted toils
Sails unknown seas to unknown soils,
With various wonders feasts his sight:
What stranger wonders does he write?
We read, and in description view,
Creatures, which Adam never knew;
For when we risk no contradiction,
It prompts the tongue to deal in fiction.
Those things that startle me or you,
I grant are strange, yet may be true.

Who doubts that Elephants are found
 For science and for sense renown'd?¹
 Borri records their strength of parts,
 Extent of thought, and skill in arts;
 How they perform the law's decrees,
 And save the state, the hangman's fees;
 And how by travel understand
 The language of another land.
 Let those who question this report,
 To Pliny's ancient page resort.²
 How learn'd was that sagacious breed!
 Who now (like them), the Greek can read?
 As one of these, in days of yore,
 Rummaged a shop of learning o'er;
 Not, like our modern dealers, minding
 Only the margin's breadth and binding;
 A book his curious eye detains,
 Where, with exactest care and pains,
 Were every beast and bird portray'd,
 That e'er the search of man survey'd;
 Their natures and their powers were writ
 With all the pride of human wit.
 The page, he, with attention spread,
 And thus remark'd on what he read:—
 "Man with strong reason is endow'd,
 A beast, scarce instinct is allow'd:

(1) See Plutarch on the "Craftiness of Animals," who reports that the elephant of King Porus, drew out the javelins from the bodies of the wounded, with complete surgical skill! Borri was a Milanese quack.

(2) Pliny, Nat. Hist. x. 29. "I have seen," says Arrian, "an elephant having a cymbal hung at each leg, and another fastened to his trunk, at the sound of which all the others danced round about him, rising and bending at certain cadences, as if they were guided by the instrument, and it was delightful to hear this harmony."

But let this author's worth be tried,
 'Tis plain that neither was his guide.
 Can he discern the different natures,
 And weigh the power of other creatures,
 Who by the partial work hath shown,
 He knows so little of his own?
 How falsely is the spaniel drawn!
 Did man from him, first learn to fawn?
 A dog,—proficient in the trade,—
 He, the chief flatterer Nature made?
 Go, Man! the ways of courts discern,
 You'll find a spaniel still might learn.
 How can the fox's theft and plunder
 Provoke his censure or his wonder?
 From courtiers' tricks and lawyers' arts,
 The fox might well improve his parts.
 The lion, wolf, and tiger's brood,
 He curses, for their thirst of blood:
 But is not man to man a prey?¹
 Beasts kill for hunger, men for pay."

The Bookseller, who heard him speak,
 And saw him turn a page of Greek,
 Thought, "What a genius have I found!"
 Then thus address'd with bow profound:
 "Learn'd Sir, if you'd employ your pen
 Against the senseless sons of men,
 Or write the history of Siam,
 No man is better pay than I am;
 Or, since you're learn'd in Greek, let's see
 Something against the Trinity."²

(1) "—— jam serpentum major concordia. Parcit
 Cognatis maculis similis fera."—JUVENAL.

(2) This line intimates the tendency of the age towards freethinkers, when every

When wrinkling with a sneer, his trunk,
 "Friend," quoth the Elephant, "you're drunk ;
 E'en keep your money, and be wise ;
 Leave man on man, to criticise !
 For that you ne'er can want a pen,
 Among the senseless sons of men.
 They unprovok'd, will court the fray ;—
 —Envy's a sharper spur,—than pay,—
 No author ever spared a brother ;
 Wits are game-cocks, to one another." ¹

scribbler against the truth, found a welcome from the public, and profit from the press, instead of punishment in the pillory !

(1) The above fable, like many of our poet's, is rather a compilation of sarcastic exposures of several faults, than an application to one ; nevertheless the envious rivalry of authors, and the illiberality of critics, are particularly exposed. No society is generally such a combination, open or concealed, of envy, hatred, and malice, as a society of professed wits, or popular critics. The ignorance of the latter order has been well exposed by Lord Byron in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* : their illiberality is amusingly reprov'd, in the following story from Boccacini.

"A famous critic," says he, "having collected all the faults of an eminent poet, presented them to Apollo, who, wishing to make a suitable return, desired the donor to pick the chaff from the corn in a sack of wheat, which had just been thrashed out. The critic having completed the task with great industry and pleasure, Apollo presented him with,—the chaff for his trouble !"





THE PEACOCK, THE TURKEY, AND THE GOOSE.

IN beauty, faults conspicuous grow ;
The smallest speck is seen on snow.

As near a barn, by hunger led,
A Peacock with the poultry fed,
All view'd him with an envious eye,
And mock'd his gaudy pageantry.
He, conscious of superior merit,
Contemns their base reviling spirit ;

His state and dignity assumes,
And to the sun displays his plumes,
Which, like the heaven's o'er-arching skies,
Are spangled with a thousand eyes.
The circling rays, and varied light,
At once confound their dazzled sight;
On every tongue detraction burns,
And malice prompts their spleen by turns.¹

“Mark with what insolence and pride
The creature takes his haughty stride,”—
The Turkey cries. “Can spleen contain?
Sure never bird was half so vain;
But were intrinsic merit seen,
We Turkeys have the whiter skin.”

From tongue to tongue they caught abuse,
And next was heard the hissing Goose:
“What hideous legs! what filthy claws!
I scorn to censure little flaws;
Then what a horrid squalling throat!
E'en owls are frightened at the note.”

“True: those are faults,” the Peacock cries,
“My scream, my shanks, you may despise;
But such blind critics rail in vain;
What, overlook my radiant train!
Know, did my legs (your scorn and sport),
The Turkey, or the Goose, support,
And did ye scream with harsher sound,
Those faults in you, had ne'er been found:
To all apparent beauties blind,
Each blemish strikes an envious mind.”

(1) Jealousy has been well defined to be the art by which we punish ourselves for being inferior to another.

Thus in assemblies have I seen
A nymph, of brightest charms and mien,
Wake envy in each ugly face,
And buzzing scandal fills the place.¹

(1) The moral here is applied to one species of envy alone, that of beauty, but the fable may be referred to every kind of it equally. Scandal is like a snail, which crawls over the loveliest fruit, and feeds on that which its own venom has first made foul !





CUPID, HYMEN, AND PLUTUS.

As Cupid in Cythera's grove
 Employ'd the lesser powers of Love ;
 Some shape the bow, or fit the string,
 Some give the taper shaft its wing,
 Or turn the polish'd quiver's mould,
 Or head the darts with temper'd gold.

Amidst their toil and various care
 Thus Hymen, with assuming air,
 Address'd the god: "Thou purblind Chit,
 Of awkward and ill-judging wit.

If matches are not better made,
 At once I must forswear my trade.
 You send me such ill-coupled folks,
 That 'tis a shame to sell them yokes.
 They squabble for a pin, a feather,
 And wonder how they came together.
 The husband's sullen, dogged, shy,
 The wife grows flippant in reply :
 He loves command and due restriction,
 And she as well likes contradiction :
 She never slavishly submits,
 She'll have her will, or have her fits.
 He this way tugs, she t' other draws ;
 The man grows jealous, and with cause.
 Nothing can save him but divorce,
 And here the wife complies, of course." ¹

"When," says the boy, "had I to do
 With either your affairs, or you?
 I never idly spend my darts ;
 You trade in mercenary hearts.
 For settlements the lawyer's fee'd ;
 Is my hand witness to the deed?
 If they like cat and dog agree,
 Go rail at Plutus, not at me."

Plutus appear'd, and said, "'Tis true,
 In marriage, gold is all their view ;
 They seek not beauty, wit, or sense,
 And love is seldom the pretence.
 All offer incense at my shrine,
 And I alone the bargain sign.

- (1) "When souls that should agree to will the same,
 To have one common object for their wishes,
 Look different ways, regardless of each other,
 Think what a train of wretchedness ensues! —Rowe.

How can Belinda blame her fate?
 She only ask'd a great estate.
 Doris was rich enough, 'tis true,
 Her lord must give her title too;
 And every man, or rich or poor,
 A fortune asks, and asks no more."
 Avarice, whatever shape it bears,
 Must still be coupled with its cares.¹

(1) Covetousness, evil at all times, is especially flagitious when entering into connubial contracts; yet the Horatian motto seems to be retained by many men and women both, in this particular,—

"Quærenda pecunia primum,
 Virtus post nummos."—Hor. Ep. i. 1.

The result is, that the professed affection which is bought, throws off disguise after a short interval, even if the plighted pair do not, as Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, "tiff a little going to church." What begins in mutual deception ends in misery, and after a stormy succession of suspicions and reconcilements, the farce terminates in divorce and separate maintenance! The only article of gold that should enter into a wedding, is the ring, but Hannibal is not the only person who has found poison in it!





THE TAME STAG.

As a young Stag the thicket past,
The branches held his antlers fast ;
A clown, who saw the captive hung,
Across the horns his halter flung.

Now safely hamper'd in the cord,
He bore the present to his lord.
His lord was pleased, as was the clown,
When he was tipp'd with half-a-crown.
The Stag was brought before his wife ;
The tender lady begg'd his life :

"How sleek's the skin! how speck'd like ermine!
Sure never creature was so charming!"

At first within the yard confined,
He flies and hides from all mankind;
Now bolder grown, with fix'd amaze,
And distant awe, presumes to gaze;
Munches the linen on the lines,
And on a hood or apron dines,
He steals my little master's bread,
Follows the servants to be fed,
Nearer and nearer now he stands,
To feel the praise of patting hands;
Examines every fist for meat,
And, though repulsed, disdains retreat;
Attacks again with levell'd horns,
And man, that was his terror, scorns.

Such is the country maiden's fright,
When first a redcoat is in sight;
Behind the door she hides her face,
Next time, at distance, eyes the lace.
She now can all his terrors stand,
Nor from his squeeze withdraws her hand.
She plays familiar in his arms,
And every soldier hath his charms:
From tent to tent she spreads her flame;
For custom conquers fear and shame.¹

(1) Added to the truth of the old adage illustrated here, that "familiarity breeds contempt," we may observe, that nothing is more sure to disappoint expectation, than injudicious association. Boldness and freedom united with ignorance, form the basis of vulgarity; and low acquaintances, like dirty dogs, soil those most, whom they fawn most upon.

"Nil adeo magnum, nec tam mirabile quicquam,
Principio, quod non minuant mirarier omnes
Paulatim."—LUCRET. 2.



THE MONKEY WHO HAD SEEN THE WORLD.

A MONKEY, to reform the times,
 Resolved to visit foreign climes;
 For men in distant regions roam
 To bring politer manners home.¹
 So forth he fares, all toil defies:
 Misfortune serves to make us wise.²

At length the treacherous snare was laid;
 Poor Pug was caught; to town convey'd;
 There sold. (How envied was his doom,
 Made captive in a lady's room !)
 Proud, as a lover, of his chains,
 He, day by day, her favour gains.

(1) Not always.

(2) "Curis acuens mortalia corda."—VING. Georg. 1.

Whene'er the duty of the day
The toilet calls, with mimic play
He twirls her knots, he cracks her fan,
Like any other gentleman.
In visits, too, his parts and wit,
When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.
Proud with applause, he thought his mind
In every courtly art refined;
Like Orpheus, burnt with public zeal,
To civilize the Monkey-weal;
So watch'd occasion, broke his chain,
And sought his native woods again.

The hairy sylvans round him press,
Astonish'd at his strut and dress:
Some praise his sleeve, and others gloat
Upon his rich embroider'd coat.
His dapper perriwig commending,
With the black tail behind depending;
His powder'd back, above, below,
Like hoary frosts, or fleecy snow;
But all, with envy and desire,
His fluttering shoulder-knot admire.

"Hear and improve," he pertly cries,
"I come to make a nation wise.
Weigh your own worth; support your place,
The next in rank to human race.
In cities long I pass'd my days,
Conversed with men, and learn'd their ways.
Their dress, their courtly manners see;
Reform your state, and copy me.
Seek ye to thrive? in flattery deal;
Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal.

Seem only to regard your friends,
 But use them for your private ends.
 Stint not to truth the flow of wit,
 Be prompt to lie, whene'er 'tis fit.
 Bend all your force to spatter merit;
 Scandal is conversation's spirit.
 Boldly to everything pretend,
 And men your talents shall commend.
 I knew the great. Observe me right;
 So shall you grow, like man, polite."

He spoke and bow'd. With muttering jaws,
 The wondering circle grinn'd applause.

Now, warm'd with malice, envy, spite,
 Their most obliging friends they bite;
 And, fond to copy human ways,
 Practise new mischiefs all their days.

Thus the dull lad, too tall for school,
 With travel finishes the fool;
 Studious of every coxcomb's airs,
 He drinks, games, dresses, whores, and swears;
 O'erlooks with scorn all virtuous arts,
 For vice is fitted to his parts.¹

(1) Wisdom is the result of observation and thought,—the one acquires, the other digests, the mental food. Hence the advantages of foreign travel can be only assured to a disposition possessing both these qualities, nor would Telemachus have turned out better than an accomplished rake, except the natural pliability of youth—"Cereus vel in vitium vel in virtutem flecti"—had been properly directed by Mentor. Otherwise association with adepts in the vices which "flesh is heir to," and the endeavour to show the same freedom in act, which the custom of other countries may sanction, break down the bulwarks of the character, unsupported as the latter often is in youth, by moral courage to refuse, and the evil example spreads:—

"Dedit hanc contagio labem,

Et dabit in plures."

The advice of Polonius to Laertes in Shakspear's Hamlet, Act i. sc. 3, ought to be "charactered" in every young traveller's memory.



THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE PHEASANTS.

THE Sage, awaked at early day,
Through the deep forest took his way ;
Drawn by the music of the groves,
Along the winding gloom he roves ;
From tree to tree the warbling throats
Prolong the sweet alternate notes.
But where he past, he terror threw,
The song broke short, the warblers flew ;
The thrushes chatter'd with affright,
And nightingales abhorr'd his sight ;

All animals before him ran,
To shun the hateful sight of man.

“Whence is this dread of every creature?
Fly they our figure or our nature?”

As thus he walk'd in musing thought,
His ear imperfect accents caught.
With cautious step he nearer drew,
By the thick shade conceal'd from view.
High on the branch a Pheasant stood,
Around her all her listening brood;
Proud of the blessings of her nest,
She thus a mother's care express'd:

“No dangers here shall circumvent;
Within the woods enjoy content.
Sooner the hawk or vulture trust
Than man, of animals the worst:
In him ingratitude you find,
A vice peculiar to the kind.
The sheep, whose annual fleece is dyed
To guard his health, and serve his pride;
Forced from his fold and native plain,
Is, in the cruel shambles, slain.
The swarms who, with industrious skill,
His hives with wax and honey fill,
In vain whole summer days employ'd;
Their stores are sold, the race destroy'd.
What tribute from the goose is paid!
Does not her wing all science aid? ¹

(1) It is strange how the plumage of one goose, serves the passion of another, and the feather of the bird aids the enunciation of the venomous spleen of the man! The quill is,—

“Torn from its parent-bird to form a pen,
That mighty instrument of little men!”—BYRON.

Does it not lovers' hearts explain,
 And drudge to raise the merchant's gain?
 What now rewards this general use?
 He takes the quills, and eats the goose.
 Man then avoid, detest his ways,
 So safety shall prolong your days.
 When services are thus acquitted,
 Be sure we Pheasants must be spitted."¹

(1) Listeners hear no good of themselves, and the sage in the fable, obtained more knowledge of the real state of man's nature, as exhibited towards the brutes and to his fellow, than he perhaps had ever procured before, from his own contemplation. With sin came fear, and our first fall separated man from the Creator on one side, and from creation on the other. Our language towards the first, breathes fear and insincerity, and our acts to the other, combine selfishness and tyranny! Here it is evident that the phase of human nature turned to meet the rebuke of the Pheasant, is ingratitude, and "if a man be accused of this vice," say the Latins, "he is accused of every crime."





THE PIN AND THE NEEDLE.

A PIN who long had served a beauty,
Proficient in the toilet's duty,
Had form'd her sleeve, confined her hair ;
Or given her knot a smarter air ;
Now nearest to her heart was placed
Now in her manteau's tail disgraced ;
But could she partial Fortune blame,
Who saw her lovers, served the same ?

At length from all her honours cast,
Through various turns of life she past :

Now glitter'd on a tailor's arm,
Now kept a beggar's infant warm ;
Now, ranged within a miser's coat,
Contributes to his yearly groat ;
Now, raised again from low approach,
She visits in the doctor's coach :
Here, there, by various fortune tost,
At last in Gresham-hall was lost.¹
Charm'd with the wonders of the show,
On every side, above, below,
She now of this or that, inquires ;
What least was understood, admires.
'Tis plain each thing so struck her mind,
Her head's of virtuoso kind.

“ And pray what's this, and this, dear Sir ? ”
“ A Needle,” says the' interpreter.
She knew the name ; and thus the fool
Address'd her, as a tailor's tool.

“ A needle with that filthy stone,
Quite idle, all with rust o'ergrown !
You better might employ your parts,
And aid the sempstress in her arts ;
But tell me how the friendship grew
Between that paltry flint and you ? ”

“ Friend,” says the Needle, “ cease to blame ;
I follow real worth and fame.
Know'st thou the loadstone's power and art,
That virtue, virtues can impart ? ”

(1) This was originally the house of the celebrated founder of the Royal Exchange, who not content with other munificent acts towards his fellow-citizens, converted his own dwelling into a museum. The Royal Society originated here in 1645. For an account of the building, see a most excellent work called “ The Curiosities of London,” by John Timbs, Esq., F.S.A.

Of all his talents I partake,
Who then can such a friend forsake?
'Tis I direct the pilot's hand
To shun the rocks and treacherous sand :
By me the distant world is known,
And either India is our own.
Had I with milliners been bred,
What had I been? the guide of thread,
And drudged as vulgar Needles do,
Of no more consequence than you."¹

(1) Ignorance and presumption are common associates; hence we underrate others, in proportion as we exalt ourselves, and in both cases, from being misled by external appearances, to the neglect of inherent worth. Yet even the toad bears some jewel within him, and every creature is valuable for its final above all for its primary, cause. Moreover Gay gives a shrewd intimation of the light and trivial notice bestowed by many, on the sources and subjects of knowledge they profess to seek, and indeed there are few spectacles more absurd, than that of the self-instituted cheat, palmed off by multitudes, who pay their shilling to see some representation of twenty different topics in an hour, and think they have really derived sound practical information upon them, and are suddenly transformed into people of science, by a hurried ten minutes' address from the lecturer! It is not every day, that Minerva starts from the head even of a Jove-like Crichton,—fully armed!

The contact of virtue, like that of vice, is generative of its own likeness, and a bag of half-pence, in which only one sovereign is placed, obtains particles of the latter's brilliancy; but the action of mind upon itself, and the attrition of thought upon circumstance, constitute true moral and intellectual growth.





THE SHEPHERD'S DOG AND THE WOLF.

A WOLF, with hunger, fierce and bold,
Ravaged the plains, and thinn'd the fold;
Deep in the wood, secure he lay,
The thefts of night regaled the day.
In vain the shepherd's wakeful care
Had spread the toils, and watch'd the snare;
In vain the dog pursued his pace,
The fleeter robber mock'd the chase.

As Lightfoot ranged the forest round,
By chance his foe's retreat he found.

"Let us awhile the war suspend,
And reason as from friend to friend."

"A truce!" replies the Wolf. "Tis done.
The Dog the parley thus begun.

"How can that strong intrepid mind
Attack a weak defenceless kind?
Those jaws should prey on nobler food,
And drink the boar's and lion's blood.
Great souls with generous pity melt,
Which coward tyrants never felt.
How harmless is our fleecy care!
Be brave, and let thy mercy spare."

"Friend," says the wolf, "the matter weigh;
Nature design'd us beasts of prey;
As such, when hunger finds a treat,
'Tis necessary Wolves should eat.
If, mindful of the bleating weal,
Thy bosom burn with real zeal,
Hence, and thy tyrant lord beseech;
To him repeat the moving speech:
A Wolf eats sheep but now and then,
Ten thousands are devour'd by men.
An open foe may prove a curse,
But a pretended friend is worse."¹

(1) As equivocation has been well termed a lie without the courage of it, seeing that it is a lie *guarded*, so the "acting a lie," as Robert Hall expressed it, shows the same tortuous spirit, with double the malignity. But of all lies, deception in pretended friendship, and an hypocritical assumption of honourable feeling, are the most destructive; for when detected, they impair man's opinion of virtue, by showing how close its counterfeit may come to it: this caused the poignancy of David's grief. (Ps. lv. 12.) But this should teach us that confidence is a plant of slow growth, and that according to the old proverb quoted by Aristotle, (Eth. b. viii. c. 4,) "it is impossible for men to know one another before they have eaten a stated quantity of salt together;" upon which remark Cicero's rule is founded, "Omnino amicitiae, corroboratis jam confirmatique, et ingenii et ætatis judicandæ sunt."—Cic. de Amicit. c. 20.



THE PAINTER WHO PLEASSED NOBODY AND
EVERYBODY.

LEST men suspect your tale untrue,
Keep probability in view.¹
The traveller leaping o'er those bounds,
The credit of his book confounds.
Who with his tongue hath armies routed,
Makes e'en his real courage doubted.²
But flattery never seems absurd,
The flatter'd always take your word :
Impossibilities seem just,
They take the strongest praise on trust.

(1) Vide Arist. Poet. ch. 15.

(2) Which it is astonishing that Othello did not, when he recited his
"traveller's tales" to Desdemona. (Vide Othello, Act I.)

Hyperboles, though ne'er so great,
Will still come short of self-conceit.

So very like, a Painter drew,
That every eye, the picture knew.
He hit complexion, feature, air,
So just, the life itself was there.
No flattery with his colours laid,
To bloom restored the faded maid ;
He gave each muscle all its strength ;
The mouth, the chin, the nose's length ;
His honest pencil touch'd with truth,
And mark'd the date of age and youth.

He lost his friends, his practice fail'd ;
Truth should not always be reveal'd.¹
In dusty piles his pictures lay,
For no one sent the second pay.
Two bustos, fraught with every grace,
A Venus' and Apollo's face,
He placed in view ; resolved to please,
Whoever sat, he drew from these,
From these corrected every feature,
And spirited each awkward creature.

All things were set, the hour was come,
His pallet ready o'er his thumb ;
My Lord appear'd, and seated right,
In proper attitude and light.
The Painter look'd, he sketch'd the piece,
Then dipt his pencil, talk'd of Greece,
Of Titian's tints, of Guido's air ;
—" Those eyes, my Lord, the spirit there

(1) Truth, like the shower-bath, requires in most men, a preparative discipline before their nerves are rendered capable of bearing the shock of it.

Might well a Raphael's hand require,
 To give them all the native fire.
 The features, fraught with sense and wit,
 You'll grant are very hard to hit;
 But yet with patience you shall view
 As much, as paint and art can do."

"Observe the work!"—My Lord replied
 "Till now I thought my mouth was wide.
 Besides, my nose is somewhat long;
 Dear Sir, for me, 'tis far too young."

"Oh! pardon me, (the artist cried)
 In this, we Painters must decide.
 The piece, e'en common eyes must strike,
 I warrant it extremely like."

My Lord examined it anew;
 No looking-glass seem'd half so true.

A lady came, with borrow'd grace
 He, from his Venus, form'd her face.
 Her lover praised the Painter's art,—
 —So like the picture in his heart!
 To every age, some charm he lent,
 E'en beauties were almost content.

Through all the town, his art they praised;
 His custom grew, his price was raised.
 Had he the real likeness shown,
 Would any man the picture own?
 But when thus happily he wrought,
 Each found the likeness in his thought.¹

(1) See some admirable remarks upon the nature of vanity in Montaigne's *Essays*, p. 173, Hazlitt's ed.: also Arist. *Ethics*, b. iv. c. 7. The man who relies for his success, like the painter in the fable, upon the vanity of the world, draws upon a bank which never fails to honour such cheques at sight; for pride and self-love within the heart, hold common cause for its destruction with the falsehood and flattery of the world outside, and no man would ever be duped by another, except he had first played the knave to himself!



THE LION AND THE CUB.

How fond are men of rule and place,
Who court it from the mean and base!
These cannot bear an equal nigh,
But from superior merit fly.¹
They love the cellar's vulgar joke,
And lose their hours in ale and smoke.
There o'er some petty club preside;
So poor, so paltry, is their pride!

(1) The moral of this fable, as in the case of most others of our author, is placed at the commencement, instead of at the end, of the story.

Nay, e'en with fools, whole nights will sit,
 In hopes to be supreme in wit.
 If these can read, to these I write,
 To set their worth in truest light.

A Lion-cub, of sordid mind,
 Avoided all the lion kind;
 Fond of applause, he sought the feasts
 Of vulgar and ignoble beasts;
 With asses all his time he spent,
 Their club's perpetual president.
 He caught their manners, looks, and airs;
 An ass in everything but ears!
 If e'er his Highness meant a joke,
 They grinn'd applause before he spoke;
 But at each word what shouts of praise!
 "Good gods! how natural he brays!"

Elate with flattery and conceit,
 He seeks his royal sire's retreat;
 Forward, and fond to show his parts,
 His Highness brays; the Lion starts.

"Puppy! that cursed vociferation
 Betrays thy life and conversation:
 Coxcombs, an ever-noisy race,
 Are trumpets of their own disgrace."

"Why so severe?" the Cub replies,
 "Our senate always held me wise."

"How weak is pride!" returns the sire;
 "All fools are vain when fools admire!
 But know, what stupid asses prize,
 Lions and noble beasts despise."¹

(1) It is the characteristic of vulgar minds to grow close to earth, like the mushroom, rather than to tower to heaven, like the oak; and low natures, whose only relic of perhaps, noble descent, is an appetency of power, seek the

gratification of this lust, in haunts of vice or pollution, which sometimes they defend, under the questionable pretext of, "seeing life!" In our day especially, the exhibition of kennel existence, in numerous tales and cheap publications current, glosses vulgarity over with a false attraction, and we fancy the cur has become a spaniel, because his coat is combed, in the portrait given of him by some popular writer, until the low habit of his innate disposition, discovers itself to our disgust! Carew, the king of the beggars, was a most remarkable instance of this love of self-degradation, who, though the son of a clergyman, and descended from some of our noblest families, ran away from school, joined the gipsies, and prostituted the finest talents to fraud and robbery, which obtained him the dignity of a titular sovereignty, to which, unfortunately,—transportation was attached. He terminated a long and eventful life in obscurity, which would have better become him throughout, than the glory of a successful vagrant, and the distinction of an arch-rogue.





THE OLD HEN AND THE COCK.

—“RESTRAIN your child!” you’ll soon believe
The text which says we sprung from Eve.¹

As an old Hen led forth her train,
And seem’d to peck to show the grain,
She raked the chaff, she scratch’d the ground,
And glean’d the spacious yard around :
A giddy chick, to try her wings,
On the well’s narrow margin springs,

(1) Curiosity, which ends in destruction, is stimulated, like Eve with the apple, by prohibition.

And prone she drops. The mother's breast
All day with sorrow was possest.

A Cock she met; her son she knew;
And in her heart affection grew.

"My Son," says she, "I grant your years
Have reach'd beyond a mother's cares.
I see you vigorous, strong, and bold;
I hear with joy your triumphs told.
'Tis not from Cocks thy fate I dread;
But let thy ever-wary tread
Avoid yon well; that fatal place
Is sure perdition to our race.
Print this my counsel on thy breast;
To the just gods I leave the rest."

He thank'd her care; yet day by day
His bosom burn'd to disobey,
And every time the well he saw,
Scorn'd in his heart the foolish law:
Near and more near, each day he drew,
And long'd to try the dangerous view.

"Why was this idle charge?" he cries;
"Let courage, female fears despise.
Or did she doubt my heart was brave,
And therefore this injunction gave?
Or does her harvest store the place,
A treasure for her younger race?
And would she thus my search prevent?
I stand resolved, and dare th' event."

Thus said, he mounts the margin's round,
And pries into the depth profound.
He stretch'd his neck, and from below
With stretching neck advanced a foe:

With wrath his ruffled plumes he rears,
The foe with ruffled plumes appears;
Threat answer'd threat, his fury grew;
Headlong to meet the war he flew;
But when the watery death he found,
He thus lamented as he drown'd:

“I ne’er had been in this condition,
But for my mother’s prohibition.”¹

(1) Some very beautiful examples of filial obedience have been framed upon this fable, but I think that they have led the writers into an error as to Gay’s meaning in it, which went into a deeper principle than the mere recommendation of such a direct duty. He would exemplify that depraved habit of our nature which causes restriction to become a provocative to disobedience; for which cause the Persians were quite right in appointing one master, out of the four they set over each of their young princes, to instruct his pupil in self-denial and subjugation of his appetites. This thirst for forbidden knowledge, merely because it is forbidden, has ever been the scourge of the soul, and “*Nitimur in vetitum*” its motto, long before the time of Ovid.





THE RATCATCHER AND CATS.

THE rats by night such mischief did,
Betty was every morning chid :
They undermined whole sides of bacon,
Her cheese was sapp'd, her tarts were taken ;
Her pasties, fenced with thickest paste,
Were all demolish'd and laid waste :
She cursed the Cat, for want of duty,
Who left her foes a constant booty.

An engineer, of noted skill,
Engaged to stop the growing ill.

From room to room he now surveys
Their haunts, their works, their secret ways;
Finds where they 'scape an ambushade,
And whence the nightly sally's made.

An envious Cat from place to place,
Unseen, attends his silent pace:
She saw that if his trade went on,
The purring race must be undone;
So secretly removes his baits,
And every stratagem defeats.

Again he sets the poison'd toils,
And puss again the labour foils.

"What foe, to frustrate my designs,
My schemes thus nightly countermines?"
Incensed, he cries; "this very hour
The wretch shall bleed beneath my power."

So said, a pond'rous trap he brought,
And in the fact poor Puss was caught.

"Smuggler," says he, "thou shalt be made
A victim to our loss of trade."

The captive Cat, with piteous mews,
For pardon, life, and freedom sues:

"A sister of the science spare;
One interest is our common care."

"What insolence!" the man replied;
"Shall Cats with us, the game divide?
Were all your interloping band
Extinguish'd, or expell'd the land,
We Ratcatchers might raise our fees,
Sole guardians of a nation's cheese!"

A Cat, who saw the lifted knife,
Thus spoke, and saved her sister's life:

“ In every age and clime we see
Two of a trade can ne’er agree.
Each hates his neighbour for encroaching;
’Squire stigmatizes ’squire for poaching;
Beauties with beauties are in arms,
And scandal pelts each other’s charms;
Kings, too, their neighbour kings dethrone,
In hope to make the world their own :
But let us limit our desires,
Not war like beauties, kings, and ’squires;
For though we both one prey pursue,
There’s game enough for us and you.”¹

(1) “ There is room enough for us both in the world,” said my Uncle Toby to the fly that had been buzzing about him, (*vide* Sterne’s “ Tristram Shandy;”) and if room enough for the peaceable, doubtless food enough for the rapacious. So long as folly lives, or wealth prospers, the knave or the needy, will not be compelled to starve. The knowledge, however, possessed by each sharper of his own arts, necessarily makes him suspect and hate one of his own profession; and, in fact, between even honest competitors there is scarcely ever sincere friendship, for envy forbids justice, and self-love disowns equality.





THE GOAT WITHOUT A BEARD.

'Tis certain that the modish passions
Descend among the crowd, like fashions.
Excuse me, then, if pride, conceit,
(The manners of the fair and great)
I give to monkeys, asses, dogs,
Fleas, owls, goats, butterflies, and hogs.
I say that these are proud, what then?
I never said they equal men.

A Goat (as vain as Goat can be)
Affected singularity:

Whene'er a thymy bank he found,
 He roll'd upon the fragrant ground,
 And then with fond attention stood,
 Fix'd o'er his image in the flood.

"I hate my frowzy beard," he cries,
 "My youth is lost in this disguise.
 Did not the females know my vigour,
 Well might they loath this reverend figure."

Resolved to smooth his shaggy face,
 He sought the barber of the place,
 A flippant monkey, spruce and smart,
 Hard by, profess'd the dapper art.
 His pole with pewter basins hung,
 Black rotten teeth in order strung,
 Ranged cups, that in the window stood,
 Lined with red rags, to look like blood,
 Did well his threefold trade explain,
 Who shaved, drew teeth, and breathed a vein.¹

The Goat he welcomes with an air,
 And seats him in his wooden chair:
 Mouth, nose, and cheek, the lather hides;
 Light, smooth, and swift, the razor glides.

"I hope your custom, Sir," says Pug,
 "Sure never face was half so smug!"

The Goat, impatient for applause,
 Swift to the neighbouring hill withdraws;
 The shaggy people grinn'd and stared,—

—"Heyday! what's here? without a beard!
 Say, brother, whence the dire disgrace?
 What envious hand hath robb'd your face?"—

(1) This is a graphic description of the ancient signs of the barbers, who, as is well known, formerly joined the art of "chirurgery" to that of shaving and dressing hair. For an account of their "art and mystery," see Knight's London.

When thus the fop with smiles of scorn :
 "Are beards by civil nations worn?—
 E'en Muscovites have mow'd their chins.
 Shall we, like formal Capuchins,
 Stubborn in pride, retain the mode,
 And bear about the hairy load?
 Whene'er we through the village stray,
 Are we not mock'd along the way,
 Insulted with loud shouts of scorn,
 By boys, our beards disgraced and torn?"
 "Were you no more with Goats to dwell,
 Brother, I grant you reason well ;"
 Replies a bearded chief. "Beside,
 If boys can mortify thy pride,
 How wilt thou stand the ridicule
 Of our whole flock? Affected fool!
 Coxcombs, distinguish'd from the rest,
 To all but coxcombs are a jest."¹

(1) This fable is somewhat akin to that of the Fox without a Tail, in *Æsop*, although what is there represented as a dexterous subterfuge to conceal a misfortune, is here the voluntary act of self-conceit. La Fontaine has copied *Æsop*, liv. v. 5.

Eccentricity frequently passes for talent, because it happens sometimes to be associated with it, so that many shallow-witted pretenders voluntarily copy the one, in hopes of obtaining the fame of the other. Hence arise brusquerie and rudeness in quacks and pedants, because Abernethy happened to be uncivilized and Porson and Parr unrepresentable. This is a flimsy veil for deficient endowment; as well might the man who had a wart on his nose, like Oliver Cromwell, arrogate the genius of the great Protector: rather let us consider eccentricity as a defect to be avoided, than a virtue to be copied, and deem that the house of the mind, is but a paltry lodging, if it cannot find room for two inmates together,—talent and propriety.





THE OLD WOMAN AND HER CATS.

Who friendship with a knave hath made,
Is judged a partner in the trade.
The matron who conducts abroad
A willing nymph, is thought a bawd ;
And if a modest girl is seen
With one who cures a lover's spleen,
We guess her not extremely nice,
And only wish to know her price.
'Tis thus that on the choice of friends
Our good or evil name depends.¹

(1) "Noscitur a sociis."—Latin proverb.

A wrinkled hag, of wicked fame,
 Beside a little smoky flame
 Sate hovering, pinch'd with age and frost;
 Her shrivell'd hands, with veins emboss'd,
 Upon her knees her weight sustains,
 While palsy shook her crazy brains:
 She mumbles forth her backward prayers,¹
 An untamed scold of fourscore years:
 About her swarm'd a numerous brood
 Of Cats, who, lank with hunger, mew'd.²

Teased with their cries her choler grew,
 And thus she sputter'd, "Hence, ye crew!
 Fool that I was, to entertain
 Such imps, such fiends, a hellish train!
 Had ye been never housed and nursed,
 I for a witch had ne'er been cursed.
 To you I owe, that crowds of boys
 Worry me with eternal noise;
 Straws laid across, my pace retard,
 The horseshoe's nail'd,—each threshold's guard!³—
 The stunted broom, the wenches hide,
 For fear that I should up and ride;

(1) For an account of witches and the act of James, which, as Gifford says, "decreed death for a variety of impossible crimes," see his note to Massinger's play, "A new Way to pay old Debts:" also the learned notes by Drake, in his work of "Shakspeare and his Times." The following is a description of a witch's abode, by Spenser, (*Faerie Queen*, b. iii. c. 7.)

"There in a gloomy hollow glen, she found
 A little cottage, built of stickes and reedes,
 In homely wise, and wal'd with sods around,
 In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weedes
 And wilful want, all carelesse of her needes.
 So choosing solitarie to abide
 Far from all neighbours, that her devilish deeds,
 And hellish arts, from people she might hide,
 And hurt far off unknowne, whomever she envide."

(2) Vide Shakspear: *Macbeth*, Act iv.

(3) Vide Drake, *supra*.

They stick with pins my bleeding seat,
And bid me show my secret teat."

"To hear you prate would vex a saint;
Who hath most reason of complaint?"
Replies a Cat; "Let's come to proof.
Had we ne'er starved beneath your roof,
We had, like others of our race,
In credit lived as beasts of chase.
'Tis infamy to serve a hag;
Cats are thought imps, her broom a nag!
And boys against our lives combine,
Because, 'tis said, your Cats have nine." ¹

(1) Expediency, that plausible cheat for glossing error, frequently induces men to select their acquaintance for some temporary end, but as the world "apes the virtue it has not," it immediately reckons a man's mere acquaintance to be his friend, affirming that the latter only would be freely associated with. Hence it arises that the connexion which we chose for our benefit, insincerely, becomes the source of our condemnation ultimately, since when the mere associate turns out a villain, we find it useless to repudiate his acquaintance, for a bad companion, when detected, like Samson in his fall, involves friends and foes in one common ruin.





THE BUTTERFLY AND THE SNAIL.

ALL upstarts, insolent in place,
Remind us of their vulgar race.

As in the sunshine of the morn
A Butterfly, but newly born,
Sate proudly perking on a rose,
With pert conceit his bosom glows ;
His wings, all glorious to behold,
Bedropt with azure, jet, and gold,

Wide he displays; the spangled dew
Reflects his eyes and various hue.

His now-forgotten friend, a Snail,
Beneath his house, with slimy trail
Crawls o'er the grass, whom when he spies,
In wrath he to the gardener cries,
"What means yon peasant's daily toil,
From choking weeds to rid the soil?
Why wake you to the morning's care?
Why with new arts correct the year?
Why grows the peach with crimson hue
And why the plum's inviting blue?
Were they to feast his taste design'd,
That vermin of voracious kind?
Crush then the slow, the pilfering race,
So purge thy garden from disgrace."

"What arrogance!" the Snail replied,
"How insolent is upstart pride!
Hadst thou not thus, with insult vain,
Provoked my patience to complain,
I had conceal'd thy meaner birth,
Nor traced thee to the scum of earth:
For scarce nine suns have waked the hours,
To swell the fruit, and paint the flowers,
Since I thy humbler life survey'd,
In base, in sordid guise array'd.
A hideous insect, vile, unclean,
You dragged a slow and noisome train,
And from your spider-bowels drew
Foul film, and spun the dirty clue.
I own my humble life, good friend;
Snail was I born, and Snail shall end.

And, what's a Butterfly? at best,
He's but a caterpillar drest;
And all thy race, a numerous seed,
Shall prove of caterpillar breed." ¹

(1) The moral here, as usual placed at the commencement, directs our scorn to the vulgar pride and tyranny of upstart pretenders, in whom, like the ass in the lion's skin, the meanness of their original nature will peep out, in spite of all adventitious ornament of rank and fortune. Especially also is this manifested by such coxcombs against their former associates, upon whom they drop the dirt off their footsteps, as they ascend the ladder of ambition. The man of really high birth is characterised by condescension, affability, and regard for his inferiors, for he, like the oak, can stoop and regain his former attitude; but arrogance, cruelty, and injustice, stamp the *parvenu*, who, like the mushroom, of only a few hours' origin, does not possess the graceful elasticity of rank, and therefore cannot bend, but snaps asunder the instant he swerves out of the perpendicular line of starched pride and vulgar assumption. *Vide* the description of pride given by Ulysses. (Shakspear: *Troilus and Cressida*, Act ii. scene 3.)





THE SCOLD AND THE PARROT.

THE husband thus reproved his wife:
"Who deals in slander, lives in strife.
Art thou the herald of disgrace,
Denouncing war to all thy race?
Can nothing quell thy thunder's rage,
Which spares nor friend, nor sex, nor age?
That vixen tongue of your's, my dear,
Alarms our neighbours far and near.

Good gods! 'tis like a rolling river,
 That murmuring flows, and flows for ever!
 Ne'er tired, perpetual discord sowing!
 Like fame, it gathers strength by going."

"Hey-day," the flippant tongue replies,
 "How solemn is the fool! how wise!
 Is Nature's choicest gift debarr'd?—
 Nay, frown not, for I will be heard.
 Women of late are finely ridden,
 A Parrot's privilege forbidden!
 You praise his talk, his squalling song,
 But wives are always in the wrong."

Now reputations flew in pieces
 Of mothers, daughters, aunts, and nieces:
 She ran the Parrot's language o'er,
 Bawd, hussy, drunkard, slattern, whore;
 On all the sex she vents her fury,
 Tries and condemns without a jury.

At once the torrent of her words
 Alarm'd cat, monkey, dogs, and birds;
 All join their forces to confound her,
 Puss spits, the monkey chatters round her;
 The yelping cur her heels assaults:
 The magpie blabs out all her faults;¹
 Poll, in the uproar, from his cage,
 With this rebuke outcream'd her rage:

"A Parrot is for talking prized,
 But prattling women are despised.
 She who attacks another's honour,
 Draws every living thing upon her:

(1) "It is better to dwell in the wilderness," says Solomon, "than with contentious and an angry woman." Prov. xxi. 19. See also Prov. xxv. 24.

Think, Madam, when you stretch your lungs,
 That all your neighbours too have tongues :
 One slander must ten thousand get ;
 The world with interest pays the debt."¹

(1) The Chinese have a proverb, that a word spoken cannot be brought back by a thousand horses; and every poet, from Virgil to Butler, has commented upon the prolific power of Fame; the last indeed gives a history of the progress of this dame, which,

"Like a thin chameleon, boards

Herself on air, and eats her words."—

Well would it be, if we could adopt Sheridan's advice in the "School for Scandal," and, if unable to find "the drawer of the lie," should give a right to the injured parties to come on any of the indorsers. "But most of all, domestic strife is a premium upon foreign malice," and if persons, to use Voltaire's quaint simile, "will not wash their dirty linen at home," they must not be surprised if the world exaggerate the foul state of their laundry. When anger gets astride of the reason, the latter at once runs away under the goad of the fiery Tybalt; and slander, like a second Phaeton, gives impulse to a career which terminates in the destruction of a world of peace, marking its course with myriad reputations, slain at every word!





THE CUR AND THE MASTIFF.

A SNEAKING Cur, the master's spy,
Rewarded for his daily lie,
With secret jealousies and fears
Set all together by the ears.
Poor puss to-day was in disgrace,
Another cat supplied her place;
The hound was beat, the Mastiff chid,
The monkey was the room forbid;

Each to his dearest friend grew shy,
And none could tell the reason why.¹

A plan to rob the house was laid :
The thief with love seduced the maid,
Cajol'd the Cur, and stroked his head,
And bought his secrecy with bread.
He next the Mastiff's honour tried,
Whose honest jaws the bribe defied :
He stretch'd his hand to proffer more ;
The surly Dog his fingers tore.

Swift ran the Cur ; with indignation
The master took his information.
“ Hang him, the villain's cursed,” he cries ;
And round his neck the halter ties.

The Dog his humble suit preferr'd,
And begg'd in justice to be heard.
The master sat. On either hand
The cited Dogs confronting stand ;
The Cur the bloody tale relates,
And like a lawyer, aggravates.

“ Judge not unheard,” the Mastiff cried,
“ But weigh the cause of either side.
Think not that treachery can be just ;
Take not informers' words on trust ;
They ope their hand to every pay,
And you and me by turns betray.”

He spoke ; and all the truth appear'd
The Cur was hang'd, the Mastiff clear'd.²

(1) “ Where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.”—*Prov.* xxvi. 20.

(2) From the above fable we learn not only the insidious destructiveness of calumny, but the certain vindication of truth by the exposure of falsehood. A liar to be successful ought to possess three qualities, each of which, from the

very nature of his profession, he is void of. He ought to have invincible courage, to meet the overwhelming obloquy of mankind, which is sure to overtake his detection: the greatest foresight, to provide against the numerous unseen perplexities which the contradictions, incident to falsehood, engender; and perfect confidence and trust in his agents, who otherwise may deceive him, and destroy his schemes in an instant. Now the nature, I say, of falsehood precluding the possibility of obtaining these, ought at once to prove the danger of such a course.

Some vices attach to certain states of life, and falsehood may be said to be a poor vice; the children of the lower orders, servants especially, almost from their birth, "going astray and speaking lies;" whereas in the higher ranks, the fashionable relation to it, admitted into the upper circles, is its half-brother, hypocrisy, for a downright lie is against the world's Bible,—honour, and is therefore expelled from genteel company, less for its irreligion, than for its bad manners.





THE SICK MAN AND THE ANGEL.

“ Is there no hope?” the sick man said.
The silent doctor shook his head ;
And took his leave with signs of sorrow,
Despairing of his fee to-morrow.

When thus the Man, with gasping breath ;
“ I feel the chilling wound of Death !
Since I must bid the world adieu,
Let me my former life review.
I grant my bargains well were made ;
But all men over-reach in trade :

'Tis self-defence in each profession ;
Sure self-defence is no transgression.
The little portion in my hands,
By good security on lands
Is well increased. If, unawares,
My justice to myself and heirs
Hath let my debtor rot in jail,
For want of good sufficient bail ;
If I by writ, or bond, or deed,
Reduced a family to need,
My will hath made the world amends ;
My hope on charity depends.¹
When I am number'd with the dead,
And all my pious gifts are read,
By heaven and earth 'twill then be known
My charities were amply shown."

An Angel came: " Ah! friend," he cried,
"No more in flattering hope confide.
Can thy good deeds in former times
Outweigh the balance of thy crimes?
What widow or what orphan prays,
To crown thy life with length of days?
A pious action's in thy power,
Embrace with joy the happy hour.
Now while you draw the vital air,
Prove your intention is sincere:
This instant give a hundred pound ;
Your neighbours want, and you abound."

(1) The same word in Greek which signifies "grace," also means "charity," but with the usual waywardness and self-deceiving reliance upon their own merits, exhibited by mankind, the poor wretch here depends upon the latter meaning of the word, synonymous with his benevolent acts, instead of its proper meaning, the free unmerited favour of Heaven. The angel's reply is very applicable to detect the hypocrisy of his boasted piety.

"But why such haste," the sick Man whines,
 "Who knows as yet what Heaven designs?"

Perhaps I may recover still:—

That sum and more are in my will."

"Fool," says the Vision, "now 'tis plain
 Your life, your soul, your heaven, was gain.

From every side, with all your might,

You scraped, and scraped beyond your right;

And after death would fain atone,

By giving what is not your own."

"While there is life, there's hope," he cried,

"Then why such haste?"—so groan'd and died.¹

(1) Were all physical beauty to be developed in its primary elements, how full of loathsome corruption would the finest face and form appear! disease would peer forth beneath the bloom of health, and the deformity of decay startle us under the aspect of loveliness and splendour! So is it with our moral being; the most exquisite leaf of pure benevolence, when unrolled, discloses the worm of selfishness within, and whilst professing unbounded dedication of ourselves to heaven, we cling to, and grovel in the wealth of earth! To the last we still plead for time, so long as there is a vice to be favoured, or a desire to be excused, the free abandonment of either, being the true test of our sincerity. A false pretender to benevolence once expressed to a Quaker his deep sympathy with a suffering friend in poverty: "Believe me," said he, "I feel for him extremely." "Indeed," was the reply, "prithee didst thou ever feel for him in thy pocket?"





THE PERSIAN, THE SUN, AND THE CLOUD.

Is there a bard whom genius fires,
Whose every thought the god inspires?
When Envy reads the nervous lines,
She frets, she rails, she raves, she pines;
Her hissing snakes with venom swell;
She calls her venal train from hell:

The servile fiends her nod obey,
 And all Curl's authors are in pay.¹
 Fame calls up Calumny and Spite :
 Thus shadow owes its birth to light.

As prostrate to the god of day,
 With heart devout, a Persian lay,
 His invocation thus begun :

“ Parent of light ! all-seeing Sun !
 Prolific beam, whose rays dispense
 The various gifts of Providence ;
 Accept our praise, our daily prayer,
 Smile on our fields, and bless the year.”

A Cloud, who mock'd his grateful tongue,
 The day with sudden darkness hung ;
 With pride and envy swell'd, aloud
 A voice thus thunder'd from the Cloud :

“ Weak is this gaudy god of thine,
 Whom I at will, forbid to shine.
 Shall I nor vows nor incense know ?—
 Where praise is due the praise bestow.”

With fervent zeal the Persian moved,
 Thus the proud calumny reproved ;
 “ It was that god who claims my pray'r,
 Who gave thee birth, and raised thee there ;
 When o'er his beams the veil is thrown,
 Thy substance is but plainer shown :
 A passing gale, a puff of wind,
 Dispels thy thickest troops combined.”

The gale arose ; the vapour tost
 —The sport of winds,—in air was lost ;

(1) Edmund Curl, a celebrated publisher in Gay's time ; he often figures in the works of Pope, Swift and Arbuthnot, and has lately been brought forward again as one of the characters in “ Not so bad as we seem,” Sir E. Bulwer Lytton's play, and is therein represented by Mr. Dickens.

The glorious orb the day refines :
Thus envy breaks, thus merit shines.¹

(1) Detraction is the tax which virtue pays for being eminent, and such envious temper does not suffer, as Falstaff urges in the 1st part of Henry the Fourth, "honour to live with the living;" yet the fable shows that even this foul vice tends rather to the exhibition, than to the extinction, of merit. As Satan is depicted by Milton to "turn aside," and to "eye" the happiness of our first parents "askance, with jealous leer malign," so the inheritors of the same infernal spirit have ever endeavoured to spoil, from sheer malice, the aspect of whatever was glorious and fair. One day, upon passing a fresh painted wall in Leicester, which looked quite spotless in its newly endowed purity, I observed a chimney-sweeper's boy pause for a moment, and regard it intensely; then looking at his smutty fingers, he drew them deliberately down the fair and polished surface of the paint, simply *from hatred of the white*,—such is envy!





THE FOX AT THE POINT OF DEATH.

A Fox, in life's extreme decay,
Weak, sick, and faint, expiring lay ;
All appetite had left his maw,
And age disarm'd his mumbling jaw.¹
His numerous race around him stand,
To learn their dying sire's command :
He raised his head with whining moan,
And thus was heard the feeble tone :
 " Ah, sons ! from evil ways depart ;
My crimes lie heavy on my heart.

(1) "Frangendus misero gingivâ panis inermi."—JUV.

See, see the murder'd geese appear!
 Why are those bleeding turkeys there?
 Why all around this cackling train,
 Who haunt my ears for chicken slain?"

The hungry Foxes round them stared,
 And for the promised feast prepared.

"Where, Sir, is all this dainty cheer?
 Nor turkey, goose, nor hen, is here:
 These are the phantoms of your brain,
 And your sons lick their lips in vain."

"O gluttons!" says the drooping sire,
 "Restrain inordinate desire:
 Your liquorish taste you shall deplore,
 When peace of conscience is no more.
 Does not the hound betray our pace,
 And gins and guns destroy our race?
 Thieves dread the searching eye of power,
 And never feel the quiet hour.¹
 Old age (which few of us shall know)
 Now puts a period to my woe.
 Would you true happiness attain,
 Let honesty your passions rein;
 So live in credit and esteem,
 And the good name you lost, redeem."²

"The counsel's good," a Fox replies,
 "Could we perform what you advise.
 Think what our ancestors have done?
 A line of thieves from son to son:

(1)

"Quos diri conscia facti

Mens habet attonitos et surdo verberare cædit."—JUV.

(2)

"Good name in man or woman,

Is the immediate jewel of our souls."—SHAK. *Othello*.

To us descends the long disgrace,
 And infamy hath mark'd our race.
 Though we, like harmless sheep, should feed,
 Honest in thought, in word, and deed;
 Whatever hen-roost is decreased,
 We shall be thought to share the feast.
 The change shall never be believed:
 A lost good name is ne'er retrieved."
 "Nay, then," replies the feeble Fox;
 "But, hark! I hear a hen that clucks:
 Go, but be moderate in your food:
 A chicken, too, might do me good."¹

(1) This fable of hypocrisy somewhat resembles Fable xxvii. except in the additional feature here exhibited, of the fancy which besets men that they have forsaken their vices, when really they are too old to practise them. Also there is a fine touch in the second fox's reply, alluding, not merely to the loss of a good name being irretrievable, but also to the obstacle placed in the way of repentance, by the exhibition towards it of an unwise and ungenerous-suspicion. It is doubtless well to be on our guard against dissemblers, still we too often oppose the return to good of the really sincere, by recording past offences with prejudice, as if we disliked to facilitate the progress of virtuous recovery; yet,

"—true repentance never comes too late.

As soon as born, she makes herself a shroud,
 And swift as thought her airy journey takes;
 Her hand heaven's azure gate with trembling strikes;
 She tells her story in so sad a tone,
 That angels start from bliss, and give a groan."—LEE, *Mass. of Par.*





THE SETTING DOG AND THE PARTRIDGE.

THE ranging Dog the stubble tries,
And searches every breeze that flies.
The scent grows warm ; with cautious fear
He creeps, and points the covey near ;
The men in silence, far behind,
Conscious of game the net unbind.

A Partridge, with experience wise,
The fraudulent preparation spies ;

She mocks their toils, alarms her brood,
The covey springs, and seeks the wood ;
But, ere her certain wing she tries,
Thus to the creeping Spaniel cries :
"Thou fawning slave to man's deceit,
Thou pimp of luxury, sneaking cheat,
Of thy whole species, thou disgrace,
Dogs should disown thee of their race !
For if I judge their native parts,
They're born with honest, open hearts ;
And, ere they served man's wicked ends,
Were generous foes, or real friends."

When thus the Dog, with scornful smile :
"Secure of wing, thou darest revile.
Clowns are to polish'd manners blind :
How ignorant is the rustic mind !
My worth sagacious courtiers see,
And to preferment rise like me.
The thriving pimp, who beauty sets,
Hath oft enhanced a nation's debts ;
Friend sets ¹ his friend, without regard,
And ministers his skill reward :
Thus train'd by man, I learnt his ways,
And growing favour feasts my days."

"I might have guess'd," the Partridge said,
"The place where you were train'd and fed ;
Servants are apt, and in a trice
Ape to a hair their master's vice.

(1) The meaning here attached to this word, "set," as in the line but one above, is to betray; the metaphor being obviously taken from the act of a dog discovering game. The noun "setter" is used in the same sense by Poins, speaking of Gadshill, Hen. IV. Part I. Act ii. Scene 2.

You came from court, you say—Adieu!”
She said, and to the covey flew.¹

(1) Climbing and crawling are performed in almost the same posture, and by the use of pretty nearly the same muscles; we need not wonder then if, in a similar way, ambition should employ the grovelling attitudes of sycophancy. With his usual bitterness against court intrigue, engendered by his own disappointment, Gay here attacks the servility with which the courtier fawns upon his patron, and the treachery which is ever ready, in the pernicious atmosphere of a court, to poison and betray friendship. Moreover, he alludes to the exact reflection of the vices of the upper classes, which the lower strive to exhibit, though those will admit, who have mixed much in upper society, that the grossest vulgarity of feeling, if not of manner, is frequently found amongst people of highest rank. “A grain of honesty,” says Lord Shaftesbury, “or native worth, is of more value than all the adventitious ornaments, estates, or preferments, for the sake of which, some of the better sort, so oft turn knaves, forsaking their principles, and quitting their honour and freedom, for a mean, timorous, shifting state, of gaudy servitude.”—*Vide CHARACTERISTICS.*





THE UNIVERSAL APPARITION.

A RAKE, by every passion ruled,
With every vice his youth had cool'd ;
Disease his tainted blood assails,
His spirits droop, his vigour fails :
With secret ills at home he pines,
And, like infirm old age, declines.
As twinged with pain, he pensive sits,
And raves, and prays, and swears, by fits ;

A ghastly phantom, lean and wan,
Before him rose, and thus began :

“ My name, perhaps, hath reach'd your ear ;
Attend, and be advised by Care.

Nor love, nor honour, wealth, nor pow'r,
Can give the heart a cheerful hour

When health is lost. Be timely wise :
With health all taste of pleasure flies.”¹

Thus said, the Phantom disappears.
The wary counsel waked his fears :
He now from all excess abstains,
With physic purifies his veins ;
And, to procure a sober life,
Resolves to venture on a wife.

But now again the Sprite ascends—
Where'er he walks his ear attends ;
Insinuates that beauty's frail,
That perseverance must prevail ;
With jealousies his brain inflames,
And whispers all her lovers' names.
In other hours she represents
His household charge, his annual rents,
Increasing debts, perplexing duns,
And nothing for his younger sons.

Straight all his thought to gain he turns,
And with the thirst of lucre burns.
But, when possess'd of fortune's store,
The Spectre haunts him more and more ;

(1) Cowley calls health—

“ The salt of life, which does to all a relish give,
Its standing pleasure and intrinsic wealth,
The body's virtue and the soul's good fortune.”

Sets want and misery in view,
 Bold thieves and all the murdering crew ;
 Alarms him with eternal frights,
 Infests his dream, or wakes his nights.
 How shall he chase this hideous guest?
 Power may perhaps protect his rest.
 To power he rose. Again the Sprite
 Besets him, morning, noon, and night ;
 Talks of Ambition's tottering seat,
 How Envy persecutes the great ;
 Of rival hate, of treacherous friends,
 And what disgrace his fall attends.

The court he quits to fly from Care,
 And seeks the peace of rural air :
 His groves, his fields, amused his hours ;
 He pruned his trees, he raised his flowers.
 But Care again his steps pursues,
 Warns him of blasts, of blighting dews,
 Of plundering insects, snails, and rains,
 And droughts that starved the labour'd plains.
 Abroad, at home, the Spectre's there ;
 In vain we seek to fly from Care.

At length he thus the Ghost address :
 " Since thou must be my constant guest,
 Be kind, and follow me no more ;
 For Care, by right, should go before."¹

(1) Under a representation of the vanity of all human pursuits, which closely resembles the picture given of life, by Solomon, in Ecclesiastes, Gay draws an application of the virtue of prudence, which by preventing ill, may forestall anxiety. "Principiis obsta" must be observed, if we would not verify the other saying, "Post equitem sedet atra cura." Indeed, in ancient times so much was prudence valued, that Juvenal declares,—

"Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia."

Yet, to suppose that with all our observation of means and methods, we can entirely neutralize that poison, care, which lurks in our very being, or limit its power as the representative of sin's penalty, over all human aspects, would be to disavow the yoke which the fall placed on us, and to disown the obligation of existence itself!

"Scandit æratas vitiosa naves
Cura: nec turmas equitum relinquit,
Ocyor cervis, et agente nimbos
Ocyor Euro."—Hœr.





THE TWO OWLS AND THE SPARROW.

Two formal Owls together sat,
Conferring thus in solemn chat:
 “ How is the modern taste decay'd !
Where's the respect to wisdom paid ?
Our worth the Grecian sages knew ;
They gave our sires the honour due ;

They weigh'd the dignity of fowls,
And pry'd into the depth of Owls.
Athens, the seat of learned fame,
With general voice revered our name ;
On merit title was conferr'd,
And all adored the' Athenian bird."

" Brother, you reason well," replies
The solemn mate, with half-shut eyes ;
" Right: Athens was the seat of learning ;
And truly wisdom is discerning.
Besides, on Pallas' helm we sit,
The type and ornament of wit:
But now, alas! we're quite neglected,
And a pert Sparrow's more respected."

A Sparrow, who was lodged beside,
O'erhears them soothe each other's pride,
And thus he nimbly vents his heat:

" Who meets a fool must find conceit.
I grant you were at Athens graced,
And on Minerva's helm were placed ;
But every bird that wings the sky,
Except an Owl, can tell you why.
From hence they taught their schools to know
How false we judge by outward show ;
That we should never look on esteem,
Since fools as wise as you, might seem.
Would ye contempt and scorn avoid,
Let your vain-glory be destroy'd:
Humble your arrogance of thought,
Pursue the ways by nature taught ;
So shall you find delicious fare,
And grateful farmers praise your care ;

So shall sleek mice your chase reward,
And no keen cat find more regard." ¹

(1) The moral of the fable is rather forced, for the owl was dedicated to Minerva, the patroness of Athens, on account of its symbolizing the far-sightedness of wisdom, in looking through the darkness of ignorance and error; thus a wise man, like an owl, sees where others are blind. Otherwise the reproof by the poet of vain assumption is forcible enough, as well as of the error of human judgment, in being guided by external appearances. The temper of the owls here depicted, is a very common one; and men talk of the excellence of former times, and of the value then set upon certain qualities, which they always give themselves the credit of possessing, as though all veneration for real merit, had passed away. It has ever been the characteristic of servile indolence, to be a "laudator temporis acti," whereas, in fact, exertion has been applauded in all ages, and never more than when, with increasing experience, the world has learned to discriminate between the puling querulousness of the shallow upstart, and the real unflinching energy of the active and enduring mind. Fortune ought to have broad shoulders, to bear the burden of complaints which idleness and conceited arrogance set upon her !





THE COURTIER AND PROTEUS.

WHENE'ER a Courtier's out of place,
The country shelters his disgrace ;
Where, doom'd to exercise and health,
His house and gardens own his wealth.
He builds new schemes, in hope to gain
The plunder of another reign ;
Like Philip's son, would fain be doing,
And sighs for other realms to ruin.¹

(1) *Vide* Plutarch in *Vitâ*.

As one of these (without his wand),
Pensive along the winding strand
Employ'd the solitary hour,
In projects to regain his power,
The waves in spreading circles ran,
Proteus arose, and thus began :

“ Came you from court? for in your mien
A self-important air is seen.”

He frankly own'd his friends had trick'd him,
And how he fell his party's victim.

“ Know,” says the god, “ by matchless skill
I change to every shape at will ;
But yet I'm told, at court you see
Those who presume to rival me.”

Thus said : a snake, with hideous trail,
Proteus extends his scaly mail.

“ Know,” says the Man, “ tho' proud in place,
All courtiers are of reptile race.
Like you, they take that dreadful form,
Bask in the sun, and fly the storm ;
With malice hiss, with envy gloat,
And for convenience change their coat ;
With new-got lustre rear their head,
Though on a dunghill born and bred.

Sudden the god a lion stands ;
He shakes his mane, he spurns the sands ;
Now a fierce lynx, with fiery glare ;
A wolf, an ass, a fox, a bear.

“ Had I ne'er lived at court,” he cries,
“ Such transformation might surprise ;
But there, in quest of daily game,
Each able Courtier acts the same.

Wolves, lions, lynxes, while in place,
 Their friends and fellows are their chase.
 They play the bear's and fox's part,
 Now rob by force, now steal with art.
 They sometimes in the senate bray,
 Or, changed again to beasts of prey,
 Down from the lion to the ape,
 Practise the frauds of every shape."
 So said, upon the god he flies,
 In cords the struggling captive ties.
 "Now, Proteus! now (to truth compell'd)
 Speak, and confess thy art excell'd.
 Use strength, surprise, or what you will,
 The Courtier finds evasions still;
 Not to be bound by any ties,
 And never forced to leave his lies."¹

(1) This pungent satire upon the life of fraud, which is the wretched lot of a courtier, is only to be equalled by Swift's biting apophthegm, "That a courtier's creed is the shortest, but best observed, he ever knew, namely, always to keep his place, and never to keep his promise." The various images of the wily venom of the snake, the power without the generosity of the lion, the cat-like, cunning cruelty of the lynx, the voracity and brutal sensuality of the bear, the craftiness of the fox, and the dull indolence and stupidity of the ass,—all ingredients in the character of courtiers,—are drawn literally after nature. Truly,

"What man of sense would rack his generous mind
 To practise all the base formalities
 And forms of business? Force a grave starch'd face
 When he's a very libertine in's heart?
 Seem not to know this or that man in public,
 When privately perhaps they meet together,
 And lay the scene of some brave fellow's ruin?
 Such things are done in courts."—OTWAY, *Oph.*





THE MASTIFF.

THOSE who in quarrels interpose,
Must often wipe a bloody nose.

A Mastiff, of true English blood,
Loved fighting better than his food.
When dogs were snarling for a bone,
He long'd to make the war his own,
And often found (when two contend)
To interpose obtain'd his end.

He gloried in his limping pace;
 The scars of honour seam'd his face;
 In every limb a gash appears,
 And frequent fights retrench'd his ears.

As, on a time, he heard from far
 Two dogs engaged in noisy war,
 Away he scours, and lays about him,
 Resolved no fray should be without him.

Forth from his yard a tanner flies,
 And to the bold intruder cries,
 "A cudgel shall correct your manners:
 Whence sprung this cursed hate to tanners?
 While on my dog you vent your spite,
 Sirrah! 'tis me you dare not bite."

To see the battle thus perplex'd,
 With equal rage a butcher vex'd,
 Hoarse-screaming from the circled crowd,
 To the cursed Mastiff cries aloud,

"Both Hockley-hole and Mary-bone¹
 The combats of my dog have known:
 He ne'er, like bullies, coward-hearted,
 Attacks in public,—to be parted.
 Think not, rash fool, to share his fame;
 Be his the honour or the shame."

Thus said, they swore, and raved like thunder,
 Then dragg'd their fasten'd dogs asunder;
 While clubs and kicks from ev'ry side
 Rebounded from the Mastiff's hide.

(1) Both these places were celebrated bear gardens, the former in Clerkenwell, near the modern Ray Street. In the Beggar's Opera, Mrs. Peachum says to Filch, "You must go to Hockley-in-the-Hole, and to Marybone, child, to learn valour."

All reeking now with sweat and blood,
Awhile the parted warriors stood;
Then pour'd upon the meddling foe,
Who, worried, howl'd, and sprawl'd below.
He rose; and, limping from the fray,
By both sides mangled, sneak'd away.¹

(1) The humorous description given of a quarrelsome fellow by Mercutio, in *Romeo and Juliet*, is not overcharged, for there are some persons so choleric, that, like Salamanders, they can only live in a flame. Yet, not only in domestic quarrel is all interposition unwise, but in every contention also, except the cause of humanity obliges us to interfere, since strife proves the madness of anger to be present, and where the latter is, the intentions of the friend are as likely to invite destruction, as the hostility of the foe. When also we remember from how small beginnings great dissensions arise,—as Montaigne notices the commencement of the war between Marius and Sylla to have been the engraving of a seal, (See Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, c. 3.)—it is wiser at times to forego even our known right, than to involve in dispute to obtain it. This, Cicero, himself a lawyer, and therefore living upon quarrels, like a gunsmith, or a swordsman, advises. (*De Off.* xi. 18):—"Convenit a litibus quantum licet, et nescio an paulo plus etiam quam licet abhorrentem esse: est enim non modo liberale, paululum nonnunquam de suo jure decedere, sed interdum etiam fructuosum."





THE BARLEY-MOW AND THE DUNGHILL.

How many saucy airs we meet
From Temple Bar to Aldgate Street!
Proud rogues, who shared the South-sea prey,¹
And sprung like mushrooms in a day!
They think it mean to condescend
To know a brother or a friend;

(1) See the account of this in Knight's London; in the biography of our author, prefixed to this volume, it will be seen that he was involved in it. The sudden transition from poverty to wealth is, of course, as general now, with Australia on one side of Fortune's wheel, and Railway speculations on the other.

They blush to hear their mother's name,
And by their pride expose their shame.¹

As 'cross his yard, at early day,
A careful farmer took his way,
He stopp'd, and, leaning on his fork,
Observed the flail's incessant work.
In thought he measured all his store,
His geese, his hogs, he number'd o'er;
In fancy weigh'd the fleeces shorn,
And multiplied the next year's corn.

A Barley-mow, which stood beside,
Thus to its musing master cried:
"Say, good Sir, is it fit or right
To treat me with neglect and slight?
Me, who contribute to your cheer,
And raise your mirth with ale and beer?
Why thus insulted, thus disgraced,
And that vile Dunghill near me placed?
Are those poor sweepings of a groom,
That filthy sight, that nauseous fume,
Meet objects here? Command it hence;
A thing so mean must give offence."

The humble Dunghill thus replied:
"Thy master hears, and mocks thy pride:—
Insult not thus the meek and low;
In me thy benefactor know;
My warm assistance gave thee birth,
Or thou hadst perish'd low in earth;

(1) Beau Nash being asked why he never mentioned his ancestors, as if he were ashamed of them, replied, "I pass them over in silence not because I am ashamed of them, but because they would be ashamed of me." This might be a ter, if uttered by many parvenus.

But upstarts, to support their station,
Cancel at once all obligation.”¹

(1) The ancients had a saying, that to accuse a man of ingratitude was to charge him with every crime; yet the contrary virtue is more frequently found amongst those called uncivilized, than amongst polite nations. The reason is, that from men being nearer upon a level, there is not so much inclination from false pride to forget it. We shall append an example of how gratitude is understood by Europeans, and how by savages.

One of the French National Guard, in 1849, was nearly buried alive in the Department of Mayenne. He was interred with military honours, and on the firing of the last volley, a groan was heard from the coffin. The man was taken out, and was thus rescued from a horrid death, by a ball having passed through his thigh, from the piece of a sergeant who had negligently loaded it. The man was soon cured of his wound, and *gratefully* commenced an action against the sergeant to recover damages for the injury!

A poor Indian in the neighbourhood of Litchfield, Connecticut, asked at an inn for something to eat. The landlady refused, when a white man told her to give the Indian what he wanted, and he would pay; the Indian said he would sometime repay him, received the food, and departed.

Years afterwards, the white man was taken captive by the Indians and carried up the country, when every provision was made for his comfort and rescue, by the native he had previously assisted, and who, having secretly supplied him with a musket, knapsack, and food, himself reconducted him several days' travel to Litchfield. "You gave poor hungry Indian supper there; Indian tell white man he never forget!"—Such was the wild man's gratitude."





PYTHAGORAS AND THE COUNTRYMAN.

PYTHAG'RAS rose at early dawn,
By soaring meditation drawn ;
To breathe the fragrance of the day,
Through flowery fields he took his way.¹
In musing contemplation warm,
His steps misled him to a farm,

(1) A bean field must have been rather obnoxious to him, notwithstanding its fine smell, for he forbade his disciples to feed on that vegetable, considering that it was formed of the same substance, as that, of which the world was composed! His objection to the flesh of animals arose from his belief in the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls. For an analysis of the Pythagorean doctrines, see my "Schools of Ancient Philosophy," published in the Monthly Series of the Religious Tract Society.

Where on a ladder's topmost round
A peasant stood; the hammer's sound
Shook the weak barn. "Say, Friend, what care
Calls for thy honest labour there?"

The Clown, with surly voice, replies,
"Vengeance aloud for justice cries.
This kite, by daily rapine fed,
My hens' annoy, my turkeys' dread,
At length his forfeit life hath paid;
See on the wall his wings display'd.
Here nail'd, a terror to his kind,
My fowls shall future safety find;
My yard the thriving poultry feed,
And my barn's refuse fat the breed."

"Friend," says the Sage, "the doom is wise;
For public good the murderer dies:
But if these tyrants of the air
Demand a sentence so severe,
Think how the glutton, man, devours;
What bloody feasts regale his hours!
O impudence of power and might,
Thus to condemn a hawk or kite,
When thou, perhaps, carnivorous sinner,
Hadst pullets yesterday for dinner!"

"Hold," cried the Clown, with passion heated,
"Shall kites and men alike be treated?
When Heaven the world with creatures stored,
Man was ordain'd their sovereign lord."

"Thus tyrants boast," the Sage replied,
"Whose murders spring from power and pride.
Own then this manlike kite is slain
Thy greater luxury to sustain;

For 'Petty rogues submit to Fate,
That great ones may enjoy their state.'"¹

(1) That there is one law for the rich and another for the poor, is a very old and true complaint, and the sophistical selfishness by which men endeavour to gloss over their tyranny to each other, and their cruelty to the brutes, is absolutely nauseating from its fulsome hypocrisy. Thus hunting is defended upon the plea of suppressing vermin, which at the same time are diligently sought for to stock woods, in order that there may be no lack of sport! The lordly prelate tramples upon some poor clerical culprit, whose delinquency he magnifies through the increasing lens of his own love of arbitrary power, which, if viewed through the glass of charity, or in the reflection of one's own failings, would vanish into the merest shadow of a fault! Hence men are judged not by the greatness of offence, but of position, and as Lear says,—

——“ Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks,
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's spear will pierce it.
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear,
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all ! ”





THE FARMER'S WIFE AND THE RAVEN.

“WHY are those tears? why droops your head?
Is then your other husband dead?
Or does a worse disgrace betide:
Hath no one since his death applied?”

“Alas! you know the cause too well;
The salt is spilt, to me it fell:”¹

(1) This is a very old superstition, and in the picture of the Last Supper, by L. da Vinci, the saltcellar is overturned by Judas.

Then, to contribute to my loss,
 My knife and fork were laid across:¹
 On Friday, too!—the day I dread!
 Would I were safe at home in bed!
 Last night (I vow to Heaven 'tis true)
 Bounce from the fire a coffin flew,
 Next post some fatal news shall tell;
 God send my Cornish friends be well!"

"Unhappy Widow, cease thy tears,
 Nor feel affliction in thy fears;
 Let not thy stomach be suspended;
 Eat now, and weep when dinner's ended:
 And when the butler clears the table,
 For thy dessert, I'll read my Fable."

Betwixt her swagging pannier's load
 A Farmer's Wife to market rode,
 And, jogging on, with thoughtful care,
 Summ'd up the profits of her ware;
 When, starting from her silver dream,
 Thus far and wide was heard her scream:

"That Raven on yon left-hand oak
 (Curse on his ill-betiding croak)
 Bodes me no good." No more she said,²
 When poor blind Ball, with stumbling tread

(1) Knives were introduced into England in 1563, but forks did not appear until 1611. For an account of English superstitions and omens, see Drake's "Shakspeare and his Times."

(2) For some amusing examples of the effect of superstition, compare Hotspur's account of Owen Glendower. Shakspeare, Henry IV. Part 1. Horace ridicules such absurd forebodings well.

"Prudens futuri temporis exitum
 Caliginosa nocte premit Deus:
 Ridetque, si mortalis ultra
 Fas trepidat.—Hor. Od. iii. 29.

Fell prone; o'erturn'd the pannier lay,
And her mash'd eggs bestrew'd the way.

She, sprawling in the yellow road,
Rail'd, swore, and cursed: "Thou croaking toad,
A murrain take thy whoreson throat!
I knew misfortune in the note."

"Dame," quoth the Raven, "spare your oaths,
Unclench your fist, and wipe your clothes.
But why on me those curses thrown?
Goody, the fault was all your own;
For had you laid this brittle ware
On Dun, the old sure-footed mare,
Though all the Ravens of the Hundred,
With croaking had your tongue out-thunder'd,
Sure-footed Dun had kept her legs,
And you, good woman, saved your eggs."¹

(1) Self-love is so involved in the very elements of our mental economy, that the instant we fall into misfortune by our own fault, we lay the blame on luck, fortune, or some unmeaning superstitious fatality. Yet these would never have existed in our thought as operative agents to our good or ill, had not indolence or stupidity vaguely looked out for some imaginary culprit, to bear the blame of their own error. Well says Juvenal,

"Nos te,

"Nos facimus, Fortuna, deam, cœloque locamus."

When, however, "imagination," to use Swift's quaint expression, "gets at cuffs with reason," there is no end to the absurdities which the latter is forced either tacitly to obey, or loudly to resist. Hence pages might be filled with accounts of the effect of superstition upon ignorance; indeed, it has been truly called "the religion of weak minds," from the servile obedience with which the latter bow down to it; so that whilst, on the one side, labour is paralysed, and duty omitted, on the other, injustice and cruelty are perpetrated, and charity utterly forgotten. For the ludicrous effects of superstition, see Montaigne, and Drake's Shakspeare, with the History of Witchcraft; and any one who would desire to confirm the saying of Lucretius,

"—Sæpe peperit olim scelerosa atque impia facta,
Religio,—"

—where the last word is used in its bad sense of "superstition,"—may find examples in the history of the Popish Church, *passim*.



THE TURKEY AND THE ANT.

IN other men we faults can spy,
 And blame the mote that dims their eye;¹
 Each little speck and blemish find,
 To our own stronger errors blind.

A Turkey, tired of common food,
 Forsook the barn, and sought the wood;

(1) This word "mote" does not rightly convey the antithesis to "beam," as the original gives it, for the translation, instead of "mote," ought to be "an'inter," which is the true meaning of *κάρφος* in the Greek. *Vide* Dr. Field on Matt. vii. 3.

Behind her ran an infant train,
Collecting here and there, a grain.
"Draw near, my Birds!" the mother cries,
"This hill delicious fare supplies.
Behold the busy negro race,
See millions blacken all the place!
Fear not; like me with freedom eat;
An Ant is most delightful meat.
How blest, how envied, were our life,
Could we but 'scape the poulterer's knife!
But man, curs'd man, on Turkeys preys,
And Christmas shortens all our days.
Sometimes with oysters we combine,
Sometimes assist the savoury chine;
From the low peasant to the lord,
The Turkey smokes on every board.
Sure men for gluttony are curs'd,
Of the seven deadly sins, the worst."

An Ant, who climb'd beyond his reach,
Thus answer'd from the neighbouring beech:
"Ere you remark another's sin,
Bid thy own conscience look within;
Control thy more voracious bill,
Nor, for a breakfast, nations kill."¹

(1) A friend of Tedyuscung once said to him when a little intoxicated, "There is one thing very strange, and which I cannot account for; it is, why the Indians get drunk so much more than the white people!" "Do you think that strange?" said the old chief; "why, it is not strange at all. The Indians think it no harm to get drunk whenever they can; but you white men say it is a sin, and yet get drunk nevertheless." The cause of censoriousness, I may observe also, is, that men are so taken up with playing the part of judges, that they forget their own proper condition is that of culprits.



THE FATHER AND JUPITER.

THE Man to Jove his suit preferr'd;
He begg'd a wife: his prayer was heard.
Jove wonder'd at his bold addressing;
For how precarious is the blessing!

A wife he takes: and now for heirs
Again he worries Heaven with prayers.
Jove nods assent: two hopeful boys
And a fine girl reward his joys.

Now more solicitous he grew,
 And set their future lives in view;
 He saw that all respect and duty
 Were paid to wealth, to power, and beauty.

"Once more," he cries, "accept my prayer;
 Make my loved progeny thy care:
 Let my first hope, my favourite boy,
 All Fortune's richest gifts enjoy.
 My next with strong ambition fire;
 May favour teach him to aspire,
 Till he the step of power ascend,
 And courtiers to their idol, bend.
 With every grace, with every charm,
 My daughter's perfect features arm.
 If Heaven approve, a Father's bless'd."—
 Jove smiles, and grants his full request.

The first, a miser at the heart,
 Studious of every griping art,
 Heaps hoards on hoards with anxious pain,
 And all his life devotes to gain.
 He feels no joy, his cares increase,
 He neither wakes, nor sleeps, in peace;
 In fancied want (a wretch complete)
 He starves, and yet he dares not eat.¹
 The next to sudden honours grew;
 The thriving art of courts he knew;
 He reach'd the height of power and place,
 Then fell, the victim of disgrace.²

(1) ——"Like a miser midst his store
 Who grasps and grasps till he can hold no more;
 And when his strength is wanting to his mind,
 Looks back and sighs on what he left behind."—**DRYDEN**.

(2) See the fall of Sejanus magnificently described in the Tenth Satire of Juvenal; and Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes.

Beauty with early bloom supplies
 His daughter's cheek, and points her eyes.
 The vain coquette each suit disdains,
 And glories in her lovers' pains.
 With age she fades, each lover flies;
 Contemn'd, forlorn, she pines and dies.¹

When Jove the Father's grief survey'd,
 And heard him Heaven and Fate upbraid,
 Thus spoke the God: "By outward show,
 Men judge of happiness and woe.
 Shall ignorance of good and ill
 Dare to direct th' eternal will?
 Seek virtue; and, of that possess'd,
 To Providence resign the rest."²

(1) *Vide* dissection of a coquette's heart, Spectator, No. 281.

(2) Whilst the direction of the Christian religion to its professors is "in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let their requests be made known unto God," we are in no wise authorized to dictate blessings to the Almighty will; for,

"If heaven should always grant what we think best,
 We should be ruin'd by our own request."

Like the silly fly, which, walking over the lamp glass, and dazzled with the glare, longs to reach that, which, if attained, would destroy it, so man wildly invokes or madly upbraids heaven for results as unforeseen as illusory.

The Tenth Satire of Juvenal is an admirable exponent of this subject, and Virgil gives advice which may serve as a moral to the fable. We append Dryden's translation of the part.

"What then remains? are we deprived of will?
 Must we not wish, for fear of wishing ill?
 Receive my counsel and securely move;
 Entrust thy fortune to the pow'rs above;
 Leave them to manage for thee and to grant
 What their unerring wisdom sees thee want.
 In goodness, as in greatness, they excel;
 Oh! that we loved ourselves but half so well."





THE TWO MONKEYS.

THE learned, full of inward pride,
The fops of outward show deride;
The fop, with learning at defiance,
Scoffs at the pedant and the science:
The Don, a formal solemn strutter,
Despises Monsieur's airs and flutter;
While Monsieur mocks the formal fool,
Who looks, and speaks, and walks, by rule.

Britain, a medley of the twain,
 As pert as France, as grave as Spain,
 In fancy wiser than the rest,
 Laughs at them both, of both the jest.
 Is not the Poet's chiming close,
 Censured by all the sons of Prose?
 While bards of quick imagination
 Despise the sleepy prose narration.
 Men laugh at apes, they men contemn;
 For what are we, but apes to them?¹

Two Monkeys went to Southwark fair,
 No critics had a sourer air:
 They forced their way through draggled folks,
 Who gaped to catch Jack Pudding's jokes;
 Then took their tickets for the show,
 And got by chance, the foremost row.
 To see their grave observing face
 Provok'd a laugh throughout the place.

"Brother," says Pug, and turn'd his head,
 "The rabble's monstrously ill-bred."

Now through the booth loud hisses ran,
 Nor ended till the show began.
 The tumbler whirls the flip-flap round,
 With sommersets he shakes the ground;²
 The cord beneath the dancer springs;
 Aloft in air the vaulter swings;
 Distorted now, now prone depends,
 Now through his twisted arms ascends;

(1) "Criticism is like a shuttlecock, and every one is furnished with a racket to pass it off from himself to his neighbour."—SWIFT.

(2) The word "sommerset" is derived from "soubresaut;" it is sometimes written "summersalt."

The crowd, in wonder and delight,
With clapping hands, applaud the sight.

With smiles, quoth Pug, "If pranks like these
The giant apes of reason please,
How would they wonder at our arts?
They must adore us for our parts.
High on the twig I've seen you cling,
Play, twist, and turn in airy ring;
How can those clumsy things like me
Fly with a bound from tree to tree?
But yet, by this applause, we find
These emulators of our kind
Discern our worth, our parts regard,
Who our mean mimics thus reward."

"Brother," the grinning mate replies,
"In this I grant that man is wise:
While good example they pursue,
We must allow some praise is due;
But when they strain beyond their guide,
I laugh to scorn the mimic pride;
For how fantastic is the sight,
To meet men always bolt upright,
Because we sometimes walk on two!
I hate the imitating crew."¹

(1) This is one of the most finished of Gay's productions if we consider the lively vein of satire so justly levelled at the ignorant and supercilious conceit of mankind, which, wishing to arrogate all excellency, even of physical power, to itself, strives after what may be termed, "brute accomplishments." The observation in the last line is a fac-simile of the indolent pride which characterises the observation of many, and might pass, word for word, for a prim speech of some fine lady, newly raised to a precarious dignity, looking down upon those whose society she has just quitted, but now considers as her inferiors; or for the pedantic arrogance of some inflated scholar, who boasts the knowledge of every language and science, but whom a blacksmith could surpass, in common sense.



THE OWL AND THE FARMER.

AN Owl of grave deport and mien,
Who (like the Turk) was seldom seen,
Within a barn had chose his station,
As fit for prey and contemplation.
Upon a beam aloft he sits,
And nods, and seems to think, by fits.
(So have I seen a man of news,
Or Post-boy or Gazette peruse,

Smoke, nod, and talk with voice profound,
And fix the fate of Europe round.)¹
Sheaves piled on sheaves, hid all the floor:—
At dawn of morn to view his store
The Farmer came. The hooting guest,
His self-importance, thus exprest:

“Reason in man is mere pretence:
How weak, how shallow, is his sense!
To treat with scorn the Bird of Night,
Declares his folly or his spite.
Then, too, how partial is his praise!
The lark's, the linnet's chirping lays,
To his ill-judging ears are fine,
And nightingales are all divine:
But the more knowing feather'd race
See wisdom stamp'd upon my face.
Whene'er to visit light I deign,
What flocks of fowl compose my train!
Like slaves, they crowd my flight behind,
And own me of superior kind.”

The Farmer laugh'd, and thus replied:
“Thou dull important lump of pride!
Dar'st thou with that harsh grating tongue
Depreciate birds of warbling song?
Indulge thy spleen: know, men and fowl
Regard thee, as thou art, an Owl.
Besides, proud Blockhead! be not vain
Of what thou call'st thy slaves and train:

(1) *Vide* Wilkie's picture of the “Village Politicians.” It requires small talent to acquire the fame of political sagacity, seeing that of politicians it may be spoken, as of Apollo's oracle,

“Quidquid dixit Apollo
Aut erit aut non,”

Few follow Wisdom or her rules;
Fools in derision follow fools."¹

(1) The criticisms of self-conceit, though worthless, form nevertheless a frequent source of gratification, to those who find in them a safety valve, for the wounded pride and sense of indignity which they entertain towards the world, for not appreciating, what they consider, excellent in themselves. Hence arise ill-tempered sallies at the misery of life, at the uncharitableness of mankind, whereas true worth is sure to make its way, even by the striking qualification of its humility; and the world, with all its faults, rarely blames unjustly, and would least of all censure the excellence which is too valuable to be disregarded. When, however, spleen and disappointment affect the judgment, we are apt to pride ourselves upon the possession of what should constitute our shame, and imagine that the notice of vulgar derision is the applause of the virtuous and great. I may add, that of all humbugs, your grave sententious humbug is the worst, who shakes his head at the wit he cannot comprehend, and who, like the owl, is dazzled by the sun of intellect around him. Besides, such are generally narrow-minded hypocrites, who will be guilty of a thousand meannesses,—*if done in a quiet way*; for verily, "Gravity," as Bolingbroke says, "is the essence of imposture."





THE JUGGLERS.

A JUGGLER long through all the town
Had raised his fortune and renown ;
You'd think (so far his art transcends)
The devil at his fingers' ends.

Vice heard his fame, she read his bill ;
Convinced of his inferior skill,
She sought his booth, and from the crowd
Defied the man of art aloud.

"Is this then he so famed for sleight?
Can this slow bungler cheat your sight?
Dares he with me dispute the prize?
I leave it to impartial eyes."

Provoked, the Juggler cried, "'Tis done;
In science I submit to none."

Thus said, the cups and balls he play'd;
By turns this here, that there, convey'd.
The cards, obedient to his words,
Are by a fillip turn'd to birds.
His little boxes change the grain:
Trick ~~after~~ trick deludes the train.
He shakes his bag, he shows all fair:
His fingers spread, and ~~nothing~~ there:
Then bids it rain with showers of gold;
And now his ivory eggs are told!
But when from thence the hen he draws,
Amazed spectators hum applause.

Vice now stept forth, and took the place,
With all the forms of his grimace.

"This magic looking-glass," she cries,
"(There, hand it round) will charm ~~your~~ eyes."
Each eager eye the sight desired,
And every man himself admired.¹

Next, to a Senator addressing,
"See this bank-note,—observe the blessing—
Breathe on the bill. Hey, pass! 'Tis gone."
Upon his lips a padlock shown.
A second puff the magic broke;
The padlock vanish'd, and he spoke.²

(1) This signifies the contamination of the moral perception, by vice.

(2) He here touches at the bribery which seals, or opens, the senator's lips;

Twelve bottles ranged upon the board,
All full, with heady liquor stored,
By clean conveyance disappear;
And now two bloody swords are there.¹

A purse she to a thief exposed;
At once his ready fingers closed.
He opes his fist, the treasure's fled;
He sees a halter in its stead.

She bids Ambition hold a wand;
He grasps a hatchet in his hand.²

A box of charity she shows.
Blow here; and a churchwarden blows.
'Tis vanish'd with conveyance neat,
And on the table smokes a treat.³

She shakes the dice, the board she knocks,
And from all pockets fills her box.⁴

She next a meagre rake address:
"This picture see; her shape, her breast!
What youth, and what inviting eyes!
Hold her, and have her." With surprise,
His hand exposed a box of pills,
And a loud laugh proclaim'd his ills.⁵

now loud, now, "pulveris exigui jactu" with the gold upon his itching palm;
calm and quiet as a lamb; for

"Money is the only power

That all mankind fall down before."—HUDIBRAS.

- (1) "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow?
Who hath contentions? who hath babbling?
Who hath wounds without cause?

They that tarry long at the wine."—Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.

- (2) Because the last ascent of ambition often terminates upon the scaffold.

(3) An admirable touch at the usual concomitants of philanthropy, in which the wretchedness of the poor is washed down by bottles of port, and the charity which should feed the hungry panders to the appetite of the sensual and purse proud.—Benevolence is dry fare, without turbot and lobster sauce.

- (4) Vice knocks at every door, and is maintained at each man's cost.

(5) See the observations of the wise man to youth, Prov. ii. 16; v. 3; vii. 6. Indiscretion in youth is a draught upon age, payable at ten years or months.

A counter in a miser's hand,
 Grew twenty guineas at command:
 She bids his heir the sum retain,
 And 'tis a counter now again.¹

A guinea with her touch, you see
 Take every shape but Charity;
 And not one thing you saw, or drew,
 But changed from what was first in view.²

The Juggler now, in grief of heart,
 With this submission own'd her art:
 "Can I such matchless sleight withstand!
 How practice hath improved your hand!
 But now and then I cheat the throng;
 You every day, and all day long."³

(1) The extravagance of the spendthrift, follows the avarice of the miser, as the shadow does the figure.

(2) This is well drawn, for, first, even the instrument of good, which gold might be, is warped from its proper purpose, when vice employs it; next, charity essentially differs from vice "in thinking no evil:" thirdly, the distorting power of vicious indulgence is hinted at, which puts "evil for good, darkness for light, and sweet for bitter."

(3) The whole of human life is one huge falsehood, from the cradle to the grave, and it is no wonder that men should be knaves to each other, when even the best of us is such a hypocrite to himself! First comes vanity with her deceptive mirror, which has the power of making ugliness appear beauty, and renders the vilest acts excusable in the perpetrator's own eyes. The "scurvy politician" is loud against public abuses, until he has been paid his price, and then, as Lear observes, "he takes glass eyes, and seems to see the things he doth not." Wine unlocks the bars of prudence, therefore is an instrument by which knavery deludes folly, under the garb of good fellowship, until the mask is torn off by passion, and the feast ends in the fray! The crafty villain promises himself indemnity, and success; the ambitious, power and security; forgetful that ill-gotten treasure is soon spent, and purchases disgrace, and that "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." The heartless hypocrisy, again, of those who can always bear "another's misfortune perfectly like Christians," nauseates us by its frequent exhibition in men who, living in palaces, and pampered in luxury, mouth out devotional exhortations which they do not feel, upon burdens they touch not with one of their fingers, to the poor outcast whose only inheritance has been care, who watches the growth of his grey hairs with pleasure, and is longing for the end of the scene! Our tears are deceptions, for physical melancholy will often draw water, like the

rod of Moses, out of the rocky heart, without in the least changing its nature, and so we see selfishness with its eyes moist, and apathy even itself for a time forgetting its indifference, whilst under the effect of fervent, but also insincere eloquence, until when the speech is over, and the hurried accents silent, orator and auditor relapse into more hardened callousness, and obtuse self-love. Vice rules all, from the miser's papered window to the profligate's arena alternating between the lazar-house and the gaol, and so universal is its sway, so omnipotent its influence, that even to correct it we must employ itself,—match cunning against cunning, and, as Shakspeare says,—

“Virtue of vice must oft-times pardon beg,
For leave to do it good !





THE COUNCIL OF HORSES.

UPON a time a neighing Steed,
Who grazed among a numerous breed,
With mutiny had fired the train,
And spread dissension through the plain.
On matters that concern'd the state
The Council met in grand debate.
A Colt, whose eyeballs flamed with ire,
Elate with strength and youthful fire,

In haste stept forth before the rest,
And thus the listening throng address:
 " Good gods! how abject is our race,
Condemn'd to slavery and disgrace!
Shall we our servitude retain,
Because our sires have borne the chain?
Consider, friends, your strength and might;
'Tis conquest to assert your right.
How cumbrous is the gilded coach!
The pride of man is our reproach.
Were we design'd for daily toil,
To drag the ploughshare through the soil,
To sweat in harness through the road,
To groan beneath the carrier's load?
How feeble are the two-legged kind!
What force is in our nerves combined!
Shall then our nobler jaws submit
To foam and champ the galling bit?
Shall haughty man my back bestride?
Shall the sharp spur provoke my side?
Forbid it heavens! Reject the rein;
Your shame, your infamy, disdain.
Let him the lion first control,
And still the tiger's famish'd growl.
Let us, like them, our freedom claim,
And make him tremble at our name."

 A general nod approved the cause,
And all the circle neigh'd applause.¹

 When, lo! with grave and solemn pace,
A Steed advanced before the race,

(1) An application to human vanity, however fallacious, never fails of popular applause, e.g. addresses of mob-orator, *passim*.

With age and long experience wise ;
 Around he cast his thoughtful eyes,
 And, to the murmurs of the train,
 Thus spoke the Nestor of the plain :¹

“ When I had health and strength, like you,
 The toils of servitude I knew ;
 Now grateful man rewards my pains,
 And gives me all these wide domains.
 At will, I crop the year’s increase ;
 My latter life is rest and peace.
 I grant to man we lend our pains,
 And aid him to correct the plains ;
 But doth not he divide the care,
 Through all the labours of the year ?
 How many thousand structures rise,
 To fence us from inclement skies !
 For us he bears the sultry day,
 And stores up all our winter’s hay ;
 He sows, he reaps the harvest’s gain ;
 We share the toil, and share the grain.
 Since every creature was decreed
 To aid each other’s mutual need,
 Appease your discontented mind,
 And act the part by Heaven assign’d.”

The tumult ceased. The Colt submitted ;
 And, like his ancestors, was bitted.²

(1) “ Ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet.”—VIRG.

(2) This fable in effect resembles that of the belly and the members, said to have been delivered by Menenius Agrippa, to appease a popular clamour, when, in consequence of the great expense of war, the multitude refused further taxation. (Liv. ii. 32). Its object generally is to instil contentment in all members of a community by representing that however worthless or burdensome, the upper classes or ruling body, may appear, yet their maintenance is necessary for

the security of each person's individual enjoyment, as the key-stone is for the stability of the arch. It is observable that those who most repine in an inferior condition are the first to oppress when elevated, and no pressure of old established authority is equal to the arrogance of the upstart, and the tyranny of the vulgar parvenu. Though, as Aristotle observes in his Rhetoric, the young are ardent, sanguine, and err on the side of excess, yet it is to their energy we owe as much improvement as to the experience of the old, whose capacities are impeded by too much caution, and their endeavours cramped by timidity. Hence the colt in the fable, though "snubbed" as usual, by the aged horse, on the score of his inexperience, argued from a just desire of liberty, which was meagrely met by that plea, appropriate to age, selfish expediency. Nothing could impugn the proper aim of the colt after freedom, but the impossibility to obtain it: nothing, moreover, can sanction the ill-treatment of a quadruped by a biped brute, to whom, the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration of souls, presents a fitting recompense for cruelty. If a horse could think, he could wish no harder punishment for his driver, than to be in the shafts, instead of on the box!





THE HOUND AND THE HUNTSMAN.

IMPERTINENCE at first is borne
With heedless slight, or smiles of scorn :
Teased into wrath, what patience bears
The noisy fool who perseveres?¹

(1) Solomon advises us (in Prov. xxvi. 4,) not to answer a fool according to his folly, "lest thou also be like unto him:" but in the next verse tells us that we should answer him, "lest he be wise in his own conceit." Both counsels are needful, but the wise man knows the proper time to adopt either.

The morning wakes, the Huntsman sounds,
At once rush forth the joyful Hounds ;
They seek the wood with eager pace,
Through bush, through brier, explore the chase.
Now scatter'd wide they try the plain,
And snuff the dewy turf in vain.
What care, what industry, what pains !
What universal silence reigns !

Ringwood, a dog of little fame,
Young, pert, and ignorant of game,
At once displays his babbling throat ;
The pack, regardless of the note,
Pursue the scent ; with louder strain
He still persists to vex the train.

The Huntsman to the clamour flies,
The smacking lash he smartly plies.
His ribs all welk'd, with howling tone
The puppy thus express'd his moan :—

“ I know the music of my tongue
Long since the pack with envy stung.
What will not spite ? these bitter smarts
I owe to my superior parts.”

“ When Puppies prate,” the Huntsman cried,
“ They show both ignorance and pride :
Fools may our scorn, not envy, raise ;
For envy is a kind of praise.
Had not thy forward noisy tongue
Proclaim'd thee always in the wrong,
Thou might'st have mingled with the rest,
And ne'er thy foolish nose confest :
But fools, to talking ever prone,
Are sure to make their follies known.”¹

(1) This fable is ably drawn to show the impossibility of teaching ignorance

its own folly, when corroborated (as always) by self-conceit. The observation that envy is a kind of praise, is strictly true; moreover it is one concomitant of conceit, to be ever, carping for praise, so that by seeking attention it attracts observation to its absurdity, which might otherwise escape censure from the powerful, or at all events the notice of the wise. "*Argutos inter strepit anser olores,*" is the motto of every impertinent coxcomb, and in no instance, when introduced into society, does he fail to act up to it. Reiterated disappointment, the neglect which cuts the spirit like a sword, or the actual canter of the world's scorn, together with those oppressive and continual cares, which wither in the soul all hope and energy of resistance, and render it, at length, passive beneath assault, test the difference between pride and conceit; for the latter, akin to vanity, falls speedily prostrate; the other, founded upon true self-esteem, is impregnable. Hence it has been well said, that a proud man is too proud to be vain, for vanity draws its support from the applause of the world, pride from the approbation of self, looking down with just contempt upon the fitful gusts of the "*popularis aura,*" whose scorn or smile it neither seeks nor fears.





THE POET AND THE ROSE.

I HATE the man who builds his name
On ruins of another's fame:¹
Thus prudes, by characters o'erthrown,
Imagine that they raise their own;
Thus scribblers covetous of praise,
Think slander can transplant the bays.

(1) Juvenal's observation is:—

“Miserum est alienæ incumbere famæ.”—Sat. viii. 76.

Beauties and bards have equal pride,
 With both all rivals are decried.
 Who praises Lesbia's eyes and feature,
 Must call her sister "awkward creature;"
 For the kind flattery's sure to charm,
 When we some other nymph disarm.¹

As in the cool of early day
 A Poet sought the sweets of May,
 The garden's fragrant breath ascends,
 And every stalk with odour bends.
 A Rose he pluck'd: he gazed, admired,
 Thus singing, as the Muse inspired:—
 "Go, Rose, my Chloe's bosom grace;

How happy should I prove,
 Might I supply that envied place
 With never-fading love!
 There, Phoenix-like, beneath her eye,
 Involved in fragrance, burn and die.

"Know, hapless flower! that thou shalt find
 More fragrant Roses there:
 I see thy withering head reclined
 With envy and despair!
 One common fate we both must prove;
 You die with envy, I with love."

"Spare your comparisons," replied
 An angry Rose, who grew beside;
 "Of all mankind you should not flout us;
 What can a Poet do without us!

(1) "For malice will with joy, the lie receive,
 Report, and what it wishes true, believe."

Vide Yalden's Ovid's Art of Love.

In every love-song Roses bloom,
We lend you colour and perfume.
Does it to Chloe's charms conduce,
To found her praise on our abuse?
Must we, to flatter her, be made
To wither, envy, pine, and fade?" ¹

(1) The rose remarks justly, upon the poet's need of flowers for apostrophe to his "ladye love," for indeed all the blossoms of creation,—above, the stars, and below, the flowers,—have been ransacked to furnish images of compliment, by every poetaster that ever penned a sonnet "to his mistress' eyebrow." Hence "to speak ill of the bridge which carries one over" is sheer ingratitude, yet how often do we sacrifice a friend, to court the pleasure of a mere acquaintance, and willingly deteriorate the service of one who had no more to give, in order to obtain the good offices of him, whose only superiority is in the power, and not the will, to serve us! It is seldom, but that the most independent characters leave some stain upon the steps by which they climb to fame. The Ethics of Aristotle, b. iv. c. 4, should be studied in relation to this fable, as he therein draws, with his usual accuracy, this distinction, amongst others, between the magnanimous and the little-minded man, viz. that the first is not fond of talking of people,—cares more for truth than opinion,—and does not care that he himself should be praised, nor that others should be blamed. Hence, I am sorry to say, you do not often find magnanimity amongst women, whose friendship is easier got by maligning a rival, than by impartial vindication of truth.





THE CUR, THE HORSE, AND THE SHEPHERD'S DOG.

THE lad of all-sufficient merit,
With modesty ne'er damps his spirit;¹

(1) Which, strange to say, is in one sense, good policy; for never was there a high-mettled steed yet, who won the race, and would have done so, had he started, already beaten in his own estimation. A *proper* self-estimate is the sure stimulus to successful exertion; the abuse of it, as exhibited here, is to be repudiated. Many clap-trap sentiments have obtained currency, from the inattention to the marks by which right is separated from wrong; but one thing is certain, that if clever men had not known their own value in some degree, they would not have troubled the world with their lucubrations, and art, science, and industry, had perished together.

Presuming on his own deserts,
On all alike his tongue exerts :
His noisy jokes at random throws,
And pertly spatters friends and foes.
In wit and war the bully race
Contribute to their own disgrace :
Too late the forward youth shall find
That jokes are sometimes paid in kind ;
Or if they canker in the breast,
He makes a foe, who makes a jest.

A village Cur, of snappish race,
The pertest puppy of the place,
Imagined that his treble throat
Was blest with Music's sweetest note ;
In the mid road he basking lay,
The yelping nuisance of the way ;
For not a creature pass'd along
But had a sample of his song.
Soon as the trotting Steed he hears,
He starts, he cocks his dapper ears ;
Away he scours, assaults his hoof ;
Now near him snarls, now barks aloof ;
With shrill impertinence attends,
Nor leaves him till the village ends.
It chanced, upon his evil day,
A Pad came pacing down the way ;
The Cur, with never-ceasing tongue,
Upon the passing traveller sprung.
The Horse, from scorn provoked to ire,
Flung backward ; rolling in the mire,
The Puppy howl'd, and bleeding lay ;
The Pad in peace pursued his way.

A Shepherd's Dog, who saw the deed,
 Detesting the vexatious breed,
 Bespoke him thus: "When coxcombs prate,
 They kindle wrath, contempt, or hate;
 Thy teasing tongue had judgment tied,
 Thou hadst not like a puppy died."¹

(1) The malice which often disgraces irony, is never better detected and chastised, than by a blow from the same weapon, and this remark applies to many talented but ill-bred men, who reckless where they plant the thorn, whilst they pursue for themselves the garland, sometimes by an unlucky "*contretemps*," exchange the two, to their own cost. Thus a jest is frequently paid in kind, as in the case of the poet, Madera, who having calumniated a noble lady, called Fontana, was called to account for his impropriety, by Pope Sextus V. He declared he had no reason for the slander, but that 'Putana' rhymed to 'Fontana,' upon which the witty Pontiff, in the same humour, condemned him to the galleys, "merely," said he, "because 'Galera,' is a good rhyme to 'Madera.'" Upon another occasion, a young man having picked his friend's pocket in joke, in order to witness his distress when requiring his money, found the tables most unpleasantly turned upon himself, for on putting his hand into his own pocket, to refund the money, he discovered that a real thief had walked off with it; in no joke, and left him to pay the cost in sad earnest. So true is it, that those who "come to shear, often go back shorn."





THE COURT OF DEATH.

DEATH, on a solemn night of state,
In all his pomp of terror sate:
The' attendants of his gloomy reign,
Diseases dire,—a ghastly train—
Crowd the vast court! With hollow tone
A voice thus thunder'd from the throne:
"This night our minister we name;
Let every servant speak his claim;

Merit shall bear this ebon wand."—
All, at the word, stretch'd forth their hand.

Fever, with burning heat possess'd,
Advanced, and for the wand address'd:¹

"I to the weekly bills appeal,
Let those express my fervent zeal;
On every slight occasion near,
With violence I persevere."

Next Gout appears with limping pace,
Pleads how he shifts from place to place;
From head to foot how swift he flies,
And every joint and sinew plies;
Still working when he seems suppress'd,
A most tenacious stubborn guest.²

A haggard Spectre from the crew
Crawls forth, and thus asserts his due:
"'Tis I who taint the sweetest joy,
And in the shape of Love destroy:
My shanks, sunk eyes, and noseless face,
Prove my pretension to the place."

Stone urg'd his ever-growing force;
And next, Consumption's meagre corse,
With feeble voice, that scarce was heard,
Broke with short coughs, his suit preferr'd:
"Let none object my lingering way,
I gain, like Fabius, by delay;
Fatigue and weaken every foe
By long attack, secure, though slow."³

(1) Fever, the offspring of poverty and dirt, nursed by parochial neglect, pampered by intoxication, and at last buried at the public charge!

(2) Gout, the son of sloth and sensuality, half-brother to fever, and descended in many cases from the "haggard spectre" hereinafter named.

(3) This living death is seen, in its early stages, in manufacturing towns, where young bones and sinews, are dissolved into gold, with which the employers

Plague represents his rapid power,
 Who thinn'd a nation in an hour.¹
 All spoke their claim, and hoped the wand.—
 Now expectation hush'd the band,
 When thus the Monarch from the throne:
 "Merit was ever modest known.
 What, no Physician speak his right!
 None here! but fees their toils requite.²
 Let then Intemperance take the wand,
 Who fills with gold their zealous hand.
 You, Fever, Gout, and all the rest,
 (Whom wary men, as foes, detest)
 Forego your claim; no more pretend;
 Intemperance is esteem'd a friend.
 He shares their mirth, their social joys,
 And as a courted guest destroys:
 The charge on him must justly fall,
 Who finds employment for you all."³

purchase positions in parliament, where they prate about educating the ignorant, the rights of the poor, and enunciate principles of peace and charity!—*Vide Minutes of the Factory System before the House of Commons, passim.*

(1) Aided by fear, of course, for when the Plague promised the dervise, to slay only 30,000, and double that number fell, the disease exonerated itself from blame fairly, by declaring "fear killed the rest."

(2) Byron's epigram upon his doctor, applies to several cases:—

"Youth, vigour, and relenting Jove
 To keep my lamp in, vainly strove,
 For Farinelli blew so stout
 He beat all three, and blew it out!"

(3) This admirable but melancholy picture of the "thousand natural ills that flesh is heir to," is one of the finest efforts of our poet's muse, and the deduction is forcible and clear. If death stands behind the chair which health fills, and picks out guest after guest, at the banquet of life, he does so primarily in the garb of intemperance which, like Othello's murder, "slays where it doth love!" The man who, in youth, never did "add hot and rebellious liquors to his blood," has the surest guarantee that in age, "his pulse shall beat equal time, and keep a healthful music." To prove how human life may protract its span, we have only to review the self-denial and rigid rule of Cornaro, the early hours

of Parkhurst, the temperance of Parr, and to cut short its career, we have merely to mix the discontent of Unctius with the intemperance of Alexander, "and soon," to vary a little the lines of Sir Samuel Garth :—

"Disease you'll find
Unto physicians only ever kind ;
Who in return all diligence will pay,
To fix its empire, and confirm its sway !"

I cannot forbear appending a versified translation of Martial's epigram upon physicians : Mart. vi. 53.

"Andragoras bathd, supp'd well, and went to bed
Last night, but in the morning was found dead ;
Would'at know, Faustinus, what was his disease ?
He dreaming saw—the quack Hermocrates !"





THE GARDENER AND THE HOG.

A GARDENER of peculiar taste,
On a young Hog his favour placed,
Who fed not with the common herd;
His tray was to the hall preferr'd:
He wallow'd underneath the board,
Or in his master's chamber snored,
Who fondly stroked him every day,
And taught him all the puppy's play.

Where'er he went, the grunting friend
Ne'er fail'd his pleasure to attend.

As on a time the loving pair
Walk'd forth to tend the garden's care,
The master thus address'd the Swine:

"My house, my garden, all is thine!
On turnips feast whene'er you please,
And riot in my beans and peas;
If the potatoe's taste delights,
Or the red carrot's sweet invites,
Indulge thy morn and evening hours,
But let due care regard my flow'rs:
My tulips are my garden's pride:
What vast expense those beds supplied!"

The Hog by chance one morning roam'd,
Where with new ale the vessels foam'd:
He munches now the steaming grains,
Now with full swill the liquor drains.
Intoxicating fumes arise;
He reels, he rolls his winking eyes;
Then staggering through the garden scours,
And treads down painted ranks of flowers:
With delving snout he turns the soil,
And cools his palate with the spoil.

The Master came, the ruin spied;
"Villain! suspend thy rage," he cried,
"Hast thou, thou most ungrateful sot,
My charge, my only charge, forgot?
What, all my flowers!" no more he said,
But gazed, and sigh'd, and hung his head.

The Hog with stuttering speech returns;
"Explain, Sir, why your anger burns.

See there, untouch'd, your tulips strown,
For I devour'd the roots alone."

At this the Gardener's passion grows;
From oaths and threats he fell to blows:
The stubborn brute the blow sustains,
Assaults his leg, and tears the veins.

Ah! foolish Swain! too late you find
That styes were for such friends, design'd!

Homeward he limps with painful pace,
Reflecting thus on past disgrace—
"Who cherishes a brutal mate,
Shall mourn the folly soon or late."¹

(1) "Vulgar acquaintance, like dirty dogs," says Swift, "soil those most, whom they chiefly fawn upon;" and this may be considered as the moral, generally, of the fable. The treachery to friendship which it glances at, is less to be regarded as the result of evil intention than of that coarse constitution of mind, which the uncultivated exhibit, and which prompts them to regard self only, in the whole tenor of their conduct and affairs. More especially also, low habits, the very essence of vulgarity, are irrespective equally of manners, as of order, so that as this last can never be relied upon for restriction, the former present no obstacle to men who are ignorant even of civility, and who observe no rule but what they lay down for themselves, according to the endless variety of humour and impulse. True friendship, on the contrary, can never exist without mutual respect, and politeness, the latter principle being in its very nature opposed to selfishness, and therefore alien from brutal minds; for, as is well observed by a French writer, "*La politesse est l'attention continuelle qui inspire l'humanité, à complaire à tout le monde, et à n'offenser personne.*"





THE MAN AND THE FLEA.

WHETHER on earth, in air, or main,
Sure everything alive is vain !

Does not the hawk all fowls survey,
As destined only for his prey ?
And do not tyrants, prouder things,
Think men were born for slaves to kings ?

When the crab views the pearly strands,
Or Tagus, bright with golden sands ; ¹

(1)

“ ——— turbato sordidus auro
Hermus et Hesperio qui sonat orbe Tagus.”

Or crawls beside the coral grove,
And hears the ocean roll above ;
"Nature is too profuse," says he,
"Who gave all these to pleasure me!"

When bordering pinks and roses bloom,
And every garden breathes perfume ;
When peaches glow with sunny dyes,
Like Laura's cheek when blushes rise ;
When the huge figs the branches bend,
When clusters from the vine depend,
The snail looks round on flower and tree,
And cries, "All these were made for me!"

"What dignity's in human nature?"
Says Man, the most conceited creature,
As from a cliff he cast his eye,
And view'd the sea and archèd sky.
The sun was sunk beneath the main ;
The moon and all the starry train
Hung the vast vault of Heaven: the Man
His contemplation thus began :

"When I behold this glorious show,
And the wide watery world below,
The scaly people of the main,
The beasts that range the wood or plain,
The wing'd inhabitants of air,
The day, the night, the various year,
And know all these by Heaven design'd
As gifts to pleasure human-kind,
I cannot raise my worth too high ;
Of what vast consequence am I!"

"Not of th' importance you suppose,"
Replies a Flea upon his nose :

•

"Be humble, learn thyself to scan ;
 Know, pride was never made for man.
 'Tis vanity that swells thy mind.
 What, Heaven and earth for thee design'd !
 For thee, made only for our need,
 That more important Fleas might feed." ¹

(1) Man, vain man, indeed plays "such fantastic tricks before high Heaven as make the angels weep," and the history of nations as of individuals, gives endless example of the absurdities perpetrated by egotism and self-conceit. These place us at once in that "paradise of fools," described by Addison in the *Spectator*, (No. 460,) until in the midst of his self-approbation, a straw in his path brings down the giant from the zenith of his pride, and the pompous dignitary is pestered out of patience—by a flea! "What a dust I make!" says the fly upon the coach-wheel. "This comes of walking on the earth!" remarked the haughty Castilian after his fall. Now, though the man might in his own opinion, perhaps, justly occupy a higher sphere than the insect, yet for this very cause, his pride becomes more contemptible, not being so venial as that of his brother worm.

The overweening principle of pride, however, "by which sin fell the Angels," is fostered by the sycophancy of those, who draw, in their own eyes, a reflected lustre, from the "little great" men, whose tinsel pomp they swell, and who like Vauxhall suns, turn their little night, to an artificial day. Thus pride spreads, and in a corrupt circle binds the patron and the parasite! "If you could ask," observed Sydney Smith, "the animalculæ which infest the body of a blue-bottle what they thought of him, they would state their conviction that their fly was the noblest, grandest creature in the world, and that the universe would immediately come to an end, if the great fluttering thing was to cease to buzz." No wonder, therefore, that man similarly should think thus of himself, when not only his mere egotism, but the servitude of other creatures, tell the same of him!





THE HARE AND MANY FRIENDS.

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is but a name,
 Unless to one, you stint the flame.¹
 The child, whom many fathers share,
 Hath seldom known a father's care.
 'Tis thus in friendships; who depend
 On many, rarely find a friend.

A Hare who, in a civil way,
 Complied with everything, like GAY,²

- (1) Because friendship is a species of goodness, and—
*"Rari quippe boni, numero sunt vix totidem quot,
 Thebarum portæ vel divitis Ostia Nili."*—Juv.
 (2) True enough!—*Vide* his Biography.

Was known by all the bestial train
Who haunt the wood or graze the plain ;
Her care was never to offend,
And every creature was her friend.

As forth she went, at early dawn,
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind, she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouth'd thunder, flies :
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath ;
She hears the near advance of death ;
She doubles, to mislead the hound,
And measures back, her mazy round,
Till, fainting in the public way,
Half dead with fear, she gasping lay.

What transport in her bosom grew,
When first the Horse appear'd in view !

"Let me," says she, "your back ascend,
And owe my safety to a friend.
You know my feet betray my flight :
To friendship every burden's light."

The Horse replied, "Poor honest puss,
It grieves my heart to see thee thus :
Be comforted, relief is near,
For all your friends are in the rear."

She next the stately Bull implored ;
And thus replied the mighty lord :
"Since every beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well ;
I may, without offence, pretend
To take the freedom of a friend.
Love calls me hence ; a favourite cow
Expects me near yon barley-mow ;

And when a lady's in the case,
 You know all other things give place.
 To leave you thus might seem unkind,
 But see, the Goat is just behind."

The Goat remark'd her pulse was high,
 Her languid head, her heavy eye :
 "My back," says he, "may do you harm ;
 The Sheep's at hand, and wool is warm."

The Sheep was feeble, and complain'd
 His sides a load of wool sustain'd ;
 Said he was slow ; confess'd his fears ;
 For hounds eat sheep as well as Hares.

She now the trotting Calf address'd,
 To save from death a friend distress'd :

"Shall I," says he, "of tender age,
 In this important care engage?
 Older and abler pass'd you by ;
 How strong are those ! how weak am I !
 Should I presume to bear you hence,
 Those friends of mine may take offence.
 Excuse me, then : you know my heart ;
 But dearest friends, alas ! must part.
 How shall we all lament ! Adieu ;
 For see, the hounds are just in view." ¹

(1) The deception of pretended friendship, the inconstancy of asserted love, have been topics of endless comment to the philosopher, whether Democritus or Heraclitus, and to the historian from Tacitus to Voltaire. In this, the most masterly of our poet's fables, and hence deservedly the most popular, he follows out the ramifications of human treachery, and shows how deceit is universally allied to cowardice, and hypocrisy to equivocation. We dare not exhibit our baseness to others, because we are thorough cowards to ourselves : hence whenever we desert duty or commit wrong, we run to expediency for an excuse for the one, and to plausible prettexts of our incompetency, or vociferations of goodwill, to palliate the other !

Another shape of the same miserable spirit of artful selfishness, is when we

declare we should be happy to follow, if some one else would lead :—how many human calves have allowed merit to go unrewarded, and adversity unassisted, upon this cunning device !

There is, again, nothing that a man lays hold of sooner, to prevent his acting, if to the sacrifice of his own interest, than the caution incident to his responsible position ; if, however the same interest can be secured by a downright flagrant breach of duty, he swallows his responsibility and his duty together !

Yes ! duty, especially of friendship, is the hard, yet sweet crust, which pride foregoes, and selfishness passes, leaving it for poverty and integrity to pick up and share !

For common friendships, the politic rule attributed to Bias by Diogenes Laertius may be suitable, viz. "to love as if one day we might hate," that is, with caution and restriction ; but as Montaigne in his beautiful essay on this subject observes, "perfect friendship is indivisible," dissolves "other obligations, and in it appears so little selfishness, as that the giver is obliged to the receiver." Well might therefore Marigny (whom Manège mentions) write of his friends that they were "on his nail," thereby intimating their closeness and inseparable union to him, and the scarcity of such real friends as to enable him to inscribe their names on so small a surface.



F A B L E S.



Part the Second.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE Fables were finished by Mr. GAY, and intended for the press a short time before his death, when they were left, with his other papers, to the care of his noble friend and patron the Duke of Queensberry, who permitted them to be printed from the originals in the Author's own hand-writing.¹

(1) The Advertisement in the edition of 1793 proceeds to remark that "they are mostly on subjects of a graver and more political turn. They will certainly show him (the author) to have been (what he esteemed the best character) a man of a truly honest heart, and a sincere lover of his country."



THE DOG AND THE FOX.

TO A LAWYER.

I KNOW you Lawyers can, with ease,
Twist words and meanings as you please ;
That language, by your skill made pliant,
Will bend to favour every client ;
That 'tis the fee directs the sense,
To make out either side's pretence.
When you peruse the clearest case,
You see it with a double face :

For scepticism is your profession ;
You hold there's doubt in all expression.

Hence is the bar with fees supplied,
Hence eloquence takes either side.
Your hand would have but paltry gleaning,
Could every man express his meaning.
Who dares presume to pen a deed,
Unless you previously are fee'd ?
'Tis drawn ; and, to augment the cost,
In dull prolixity engross'd.
And now we're well secured by law,
Till the next brother find a flaw.

Read o'er a will. Was't ever known
But you could make the will your own ?
For when you read, 'tis with intent
To find out meanings never meant.
Since things are thus, *se defendendo*,
I bar fallacious *inuendo*.

Sagacious Porta's skill could trace
Some beast or bird in every face.
The head, the eye, the nose's shape,
Proved this an owl, and that an ape ;
When, in the sketches thus design'd,
Resemblance brings some friend to mind,
You show the piece, and give the hint,
And find each feature in the print ;
So monstrous-like the portrait's found,
All know it, and the laugh goes round.
Like him I draw from general nature ;
Is't I or you, then, fix the satire ?—

So, Sir, I beg you spare your pains
In making comments on my strains.

All private slander I detest,
 I judge not of my neighbour's breast:
 Party and prejudice I hate,
 And write no libels on the state.

Shall not my Fable censure vice,
 Because a knave is over nice?
 And, lest the guilty hear and dread,
 Shall not the decalogue be read?
 If I lash vice in general fiction,
 Is't I apply, or self-conviction?¹
 Brutes are my theme; am I to blame,
 If men in morals are the same?
 I no man call or ape or ass;
 'Tis his own conscience holds the glass.
 Thus void of all offence I write:
 Who claims the fable, knows his right.

A shepherd's Dog, unskill'd in sports,
 Pick'd up acquaintance of all sorts;
 Among the rest, a Fox he knew:
 By frequent chat, their friendship grew.

Says Reynard, "'Tis a cruel case,
 That man should stigmatize our race.
 No doubt, among us, rogues you find,
 As among dogs and human kind;
 And yet (unknown to me and you)
 There may be honest men and true.
 Thus slander tries whate'er it can
 To put us on the foot with man.
 Let my own actions recommend;
 No prejudice can blind a friend:

(1) "Let the gall'd jade wince!—

'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all!"—SHAKESPEARE.

You know me free from all disguise ;
My honour as my life, I prize."

By talk like this, from all mistrust
The Dog was cured, and thought him just.

As on a time the Fox held forth
On conscience, honesty, and worth,
Sudden he stopp'd ; he cock'd his ear ;
Low dropt his brushy tail with fear.

" Bless us ! the hunters are abroad :
What's all that clatter on the road ?"

" Hold," says the Dog, " we're safe from harm,
'Twas nothing but a false alarm :
At yonder town 'tis market-day ;
Some farmer's wife is on the way ;
'Tis so ; I know her pyebald mare,
Dame Dobbins with her poultry-ware."

Reynard grew huff. Says he, " This sneer
From you I little thought to hear ;
Your meaning in your looks I see :
Pray what's Dame Dobbins, friend, to me ?
Did I e'er make her poultry thinner ?
Prove that I owe the dame a dinner."

" Friend," quoth the Cur, " I meant no harm ;
Then why so captious, why so warm ?
My words, in common acceptance,
Could never give this provocation.
No lamb, for aught I ever knew,
May be more innocent than you."
At this, gall'd Reynard winced, and swore
Such language ne'er was given before.

" What's lamb to me ? this saucy hint
Shows me, base knave, which way you squint.

If t'other night your master lost
 Three lambs, am I to pay the cost?
 Your vile reflections would imply
 That I'm the thief :—You Dog, you lie !”

“Thou knave, thou fool,” the Dog replied,
 “The name is just, take either side ;
 Thy guilt these applications speak ;
 Sirrah, 'tis conscience makes you squeak.”

So saying, on the Fox he flies :
 The self-convicted felon dies.¹

(1) The captiousness of guilt aping innocence, and of dishonesty paying the penalty of extreme sensibility, are well exposed here. It is one of the just punishments of knavery, ever to be exposed to the real or supposed taunts, of the most common observation, and, like the simile used by Lord Byron in another case, guilt—

“Views its own feather on the fatal dart,
 And wings the shaft that quivers in its heart.”

The simplest remark alarms it; the stroke of external circumstance echoes upon the bell of the guilty soul, and awakens it to the pangs of remorse. Hence wickedness is thin-skinned, and the abraded surface shrinks from the touch even of friendly association. “*Quisque suos patimur manes*,” well observes Virgil, and the self-accused culprit needs no interpreter of shame beyond his own record, for,

“——— to our thoughts what edicts can give law,
 Ev'n you yourself to your own breast shall tell,
 Your crimes, and your own conscience be your hell.”—DRYDEN.

“Ugly guilt flies in the conscious face,
 And man is vanquish'd, slain with bosom-war.”—LEE.





THE VULTURE, THE SPARROW, AND OTHER BIRDS.

TO A FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY.

ERE I begin, I must premise
Our ministers are good and wise ;
So, though malicious tongues apply,
Pray what care they, or what care I ?
If I am free with courts, be't known,
I ne'er presume to mean our own.
If general morals seem to joke
On ministers, and such-like folk,

A captious fool may take offence,
 What then? He knows his own pretence.¹
 I meddle with no state affairs,
 But spare my jest to save my ears.
 Our present schemes are too profound,
 For Machiavel himself, to sound;
 To censure 'em I've no pretension,
 I own they're past my comprehension.

You say, your brother wants a place,
 ('Tis many a younger brother's case,)
 And that he very soon intends
 To ply the court, and tease his friends.
 If there his merits chance to find
 A patriot of an open mind,
 Whose constant actions prove him just
 To both a king's and people's trust,
 May he, with gratitude, attend,
 And owe his rise to such a friend.

You praise his parts, for business fit,
 His learning, probity, and wit;
 But those alone will never do,
 Unless his patron have 'em too.²

I've heard of times (pray God defend us!
 We're not so good but he can mend us)
 When wicked ministers have trod
 On kings and people, law and God;
 With arrogance they girt the throne,
 And knew no interest but their own.

(1) The word is here used in the sense of "design," or "purpose," as in *Shakespeare*, *Gentlemen of Verona*, Act. iii. Sc. 1. *Winter's Tale*, Act iii. Sc. 2.

(2) Interest beats merit at court, and a man is there judged, not by the qualifications, but by the names which he bears, wealth being the potentate, at whose nod, ministers bestow their gifts. "O nummi, vobis hunc præstat honorem!"

Then virtue, from preferment barr'd,
Gets nothing but its own reward.
A gang of petty knaves attend 'em,
With proper parts to recommend 'em.
Then if his patron burn with lust,
The first in favour's pimp the first.
His doors are never closed to spies,
Who cheer his heart with double lies;
They flatter him, his foes defame,
So lull the pangs of guilt and shame.
If schemes of lucre haunt his brain,
Projectors swell his greedy train:
Vile brokers ply his private ear
With jobs of plunder for the year;
All consciences must bend and ply;
You must vote on and not know why:
Through thick and thin you must go on;
One scruple, and your place is gone.¹

Since plagues like these have cursed a land,
And favourites cannot always stand,
Good courtiers should for change be ready,
And not have principles too steady;
For should a knave engross the power,
(God shield the realm from that sad hour!)
He must have rogues or slavish fools;
For what's a knave without his tools?

Wherever those a people drain,
And strut with infamy and gain,

(1) See Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, "Voyage to Laputa." The poet here describes placemen, who make a high road of their conscience for their patrons to walk on. For an instance of a successful member of this species, see Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, in the *Life of the Marquis of Winchester*.

I envy not their guilt and state,
 And scorn to share the public hate.
 Let their own servile creatures rise,
 By screening fraud, and venting lies:
 Give me, kind Heaven, a private station,¹
 A mind serene for contemplation:
 Title and profit I resign;
 The post of honour shall be mine.
 My Fable read, their merits view,
 Then herd who will, with such a crew.²

In days of yore (my cautious rhymes
 Always except the present times)
 A greedy Vulture, skill'd in game,
 Inured to guilt, unawed by shame,
 Approach'd the throne in evil hour,
 And step by step intrudes to power:
 When at the royal Eagle's ear,
 He longs to ease the monarch's care.
 The monarch grants. With pride elate,
 Behold him minister of state!
 Around him throng the feather'd rout;
 Friends must be served, and some must out;
 Each thinks his own the best pretension;
 This asks a place, and that a pension.

The Nightingale was set aside:
 A forward Daw his room supplied.
 "This bird," says he, "for business fit,
 Hath both sagacity and wit:
 With all his turns, and shifts, and tricks,
 He's docile, and at nothing sticks:

(1) ———When impious men bear sway,

The post of honour is a private station.—ADDISON.

(2) No one is so upright and philosophical as your disappointed man; had Gay been successful, we should probably not have heard this virtuous outburst.

Then with his neighbours one so free
At all times will connive at me."

The Hawk had due distinction shown,
For parts and talents like his own.

Thousands of hireling Cocks attend him,
As blustering bullies to defend him.

At once the Ravens were discarded,
And Magpies with their posts rewarded.

Those fowls of omen I detest,
That pry into another's nest.
State-lies must lose all good intent,
For they foresee and croak the' event.
My friends ne'er think, but talk by rote,
Speak what they're taught, and so to vote.

"When rogues like these," a Sparrow cries,
"To honours and employments rise,
I court no favour, ask no place,
For such preferment is disgrace.
Within my thatch'd retreat I find
(What these ne'er feel) true peace of mind."¹

(1) Thus a venal minister promotes sagacity, rapacity, pugnacity, audacity, and every other quality of the kind except—capacity. Yet the criticism of the sparrow is deceptive, as he apes the virtue which he has not, for had he been promoted, he would have been the first to uphold the system he now condemns. Hence the excellence of the parties and their measures, depends, not upon their professed principles, but simply upon whether one is in, and the other out of office! "A trim reckoning!" The fable, of course, pointing out the venality of courtiers, evinces the grand quality necessary for advancement to be elasticity, or rather absence of conscience; whilst the desire of the sparrow for quiet, his assumption of content, and his vociferous integrity, are subtle touches at that hypocritical honour which owes its stability to its never having been—tempted.





THE BABOON AND THE POULTRY.

TO A LEVER-HUNTER.

We frequently misplace esteem,
 By judging men by what they seem.¹
 To birth, wealth, power, we should allow
 Precedence, and our lowest bow :
 In that is due distinction shown ;
 Esteem is Virtue's right alone.

(1) "Decipimur specie recti." Juvenal's admonition of "Fronti nulla fides," is applicable here.

With partial eye we're apt to see
 The man of noble pedigree :
 We're prepossess'd my Lord inherits,
 In some degree, his grandsire's merits ;
 For those we find upon record,
 But find him nothing but "my Lord."¹

When we, with superficial view,
 Gaze on the rich, we're dazzled too.
 We know that wealth, well understood,
 Hath frequent power of doing good,
 Then fancy that the thing is done ;
 As if the power and will were one.
 Thus oft the cheated crowd adore
 The thriving knaves that keep 'em poor.²

The cringing train of power survey ;
 What creatures are so low as they !
 With what obsequiousness they bend !
 To what vile actions condescend !
 Their rise is on their meanness built,
 And flattery is their smallest guilt.
 What homage, reverence, adoration,
 In every age, in every nation,
 Have sycophants to power address'd !
 No matter who the power possess'd.
 Let ministers be what they will,
 You find their levees always fill.³

(1) Great families are often like potatoes, the best part of them is under ground.

(2) It was a remark of Dr. Henry Owen, the celebrated Hebrew scholar, that the Almighty showed what He thought of money, by the knaves to whom He gave it.

(3) Because a court is like a whirlpool, which drawing in every substance into itself, brings up the vile and refuse, to the top, and sends all weighty and valuable materials to the bottom !

E'en those who have perplex'd a state,
 Whose actions claim contempt and hate,
 Had wretches to applaud their schemes,
 Though more absurd than madmen's dreams.
 When barbarous Moloch was invoked,
 The blood of infants only smoked !
 But here (unless all History lies)
 Whole realms have been a sacrifice.

Look through all courts: 'tis power we find
 The general idol of mankind,
 There worshipp'd under every shape :
 Alike the lion, fox, and ape,
 Are follow'd by time-serving slaves,
 Rich prostitutes and needy knaves.¹

Who then shall glory in his post?
 How frail his pride, how vain his boast !
 The followers of his prosperous hour
 Are as unstable as his power.
 Power, by the breath of Flattery nurst,
 The more it swells is nearer burst.
 The bubble breaks, the gewgaw ends,
 And in a dirty tear descends.²

Once on a time an ancient maid,
 By wishes and by time decay'd,
 To cure the pangs of restless thought,
 In birds and beasts, amusement sought :

(1) See the history of most of our chief men and prelates ; even public narrative relates many specks upon their escutcheon, contracted in their progress to power, and how much more black would it appear, if all the "back stairs" influence were related !

(2)

———"my high-blown pride
 At length broke under me !"

Vide Wolsey's Speech, SHAKS. Hen. VIII. Act iii.

Dogs, parrots, apes, her hours employ'd;
With these alone she talk'd and toy'd.

A huge Baboon her fancy took,
(Almost a man in size and look)
He finger'd everything he found,
And mimic'd all the servants round.
Then, too, his parts and ready wit
Show'd him for every business fit.
With all these talents 'twas but just
That Pug should hold a place of trust;
So to her favourite was assign'd
The charge of all her feather'd kind.
'Twas his to tend 'em eve and morn,
And portion out their daily corn.

Behold him now, with haughty stride,
Assume a ministerial pride.
The morning rose. In hope of picking,
Swans, turkeys, peacocks, ducks, and chicken,
Fowls of all ranks surround his hut,
To worship his important strut.
The minister appears : the crowd,
Now here, now there, obsequious bow'd.
This praised his parts, and that his face,
T' other his dignity in place.
From bill to bill the flattery ran :
He hears and bears it like a man ;
For when we flatter Self-conceit,
We but his sentiments repeat.

If we're too scrupulously just,
What profit's in a place of trust?
The common practice of the great
Is to secure a snug retreat :

So Pug began to turn his brain
(Like other folks in place) on gain.

An apple-woman's stall was near,
Well stock'd with fruits through all the year;
Here every day he cramm'd his guts,
Hence were his hoards of pears and nuts;
For 'twas agreed (in way of trade)
His payments should in corn be made.

The stock of grain was quickly spent,
And no account which way it went.
Then, too, the Poultry's starved condition
Caused speculations of suspicion.
The facts were proved beyond dispute,
Pug must refund his hoards of fruit,
And, though then minister in chief,
Was branded as a public thief,
Disgraced, despised, confined to chains,
He nothing but his pride retains.

A Goose pass'd by,—he knew the face,
Seen every levee while in place.

“What, no respect! no reverence shown!
How saucy are these creatures grown!
Not two days since,” says he, “you bow'd
The lowest of my fawning crowd.”

“Proud fool!” replies the Goose, “'tis true
Thy corn a fluttering levee drew;
For that I join'd the hungry train,
And sold thee flattery for thy grain:
But then, as now, conceited Ape,
We saw thee in thy proper shape.”¹

(1) “Oh most lame and impotent conclusion!” As to the remark in the two last lines, it is worthy of—a goose, but the conduct of the minister, and of the

flatterer, the latter equally as to its sycophancy and ingratitude—is a model of statesmanship and intrigue. The reason why every change in an administration costs a country much, is that the new officials have to feather their nest, whilst the old covey *have* feathered theirs, so that each new plucking, renders the public (the goose) more bare! Neither is it until disappointment has soured, or prosperity gorged him, that a minister learns—

“Corruption wins not more than honesty;”

and that his true duty is to,

———“Be just and fear not:

Let all the ends he aims at, be his country's,

His God's, and truth's.”—*ШАК. Ген. VIII. Act iii.*





THE ANT IN OFFICE.

TO A FRIEND.

You tell me that you apprehend
My verse may touchy folks offend.
In prudence, too, you think my rhymes
Should never squint at courtiers' crimes;
For though nor this nor that is meant,
Can we another's thoughts prevent?

You ask me, if I ever knew
Court-chaplains thus, the lawn pursue ? ¹
I meddle not with gown or lawn ;
Poets, I grant, to rise, must fawn.
They know great ears are over nice,
And never shock their patron's vice.
But I this hackney path despise,
'Tis my ambition not to rise ;
If I must prostitute the Muse,
The base conditions I refuse.

I neither flatter nor defame,
Yet own I would bring guilt to shame.
If I Corruption's hand expose,
I make corrupted men my foes ;
What then ? I hate the paltry tribe :
Be virtue mine ; be theirs the bribe.
I no man's property invade ;
Corruption's yet no lawful trade.
Nor would it mighty ills produce,
Could I shame bribery out of use.
I know 'twould cramp most politicians,
Were they tied down to these conditions :
'Twould stint their power, their riches bound,
And make their parts seem less profound.
Were they denied their proper tools,
How could they lead their knaves and fools ?

(1) See Sidney Smith's account of the rise of a Bishop, in his letters to Arch-deacon Singleton ; the promotion also of parish parsons to prelates, in Macaulay's History of England, tells the same tale of supple knavery. The robes of most lawn-sleeved hangers-on at courts, require a great deal of washing, to get rid of the dirt accumulated in their elevation, indeed it is astonishing they are so white as they are.

Were this the case, let's take a view
What dreadful mischiefs would ensue.
Though it might aggrandize the state,
Could private luxury dine on plate?
Kings might indeed their friends reward,
But ministers find less regard.
Informers, sycophants, and spies,
Would not augment the year's supplies.
Perhaps, too, take away this prop,
An annual job or two, might drop.
Besides, if pensions were denied,
Could Avarice support its pride?
It might even ministers confound,
And yet the state be safe and sound.

I care not though 'tis understood,
I only mean my country's good :
And (let who will my freedom blame)
I wish all courtiers did the same.
Nay, though some folks the less might get,
I wish the nation out of debt.
I put no private man's ambition
With public good in competition :
Rather than have our laws defaced,
I'd vote a minister disgraced.

I strike at vice, be't where it will ;
And what if great folks take it ill?
I hope corruption, bribery, pension,
One may with detestation mention ;
Think you the law (let who will take it)
Can *scandalum magnatum* make it?
I vent no slander, owe no grudge,
Nor of another's conscience, judge.

At him or him I take no aim,¹
 Yet dare against all vice declaim.
 Shall I not censure breach of trust,
 Because knaves know themselves unjust ?
 That steward whose account is clear,
 Demands his honour may appear,
 His actions never shun the light,
 He is, and would be proved, upright.

But then you think my Fable bears
 Allusion, too, to state-affairs.

I grant it does: and who's so great,
 That has the privilege to cheat?
 If then in any future reign
 (For ministers may thirst for gain)
 Corrupted hands defraud the nation,
 I bar no reader's application.²

An Ant there was, whose forward prate
 Controll'd all matters in debate;
 Whether he knew the thing or no,
 His tongue eternally would go.
 For he had impudence at will,
 And boasted universal skill,
 Ambition was his point in view:
 Thus by degrees to power he grew.
 Behold him now his drift attain,
 He's made chief-treasurer of the grain.

But as their ancient laws are just,
 And punish breach of public trust,

(1) The line should be—

“At it or him, I take no aim.”

(2) In fact it is very well that fable has been invented, since what is an anodyne when applied by a man's self to his ill, becomes a cautery when clapped on him by another.

'Tis order'd (lest wrong application
 Should starve that wise industrious nation)
 That all accounts be stated clear,
 Their stock, and what defray'd the year ;
 That auditors shall these inspect,
 And public rapine thus be check'd.
 For this the solemn day was set ;
 The auditors in council met.
 The granary-keeper must explain,
 And balance his account of grain.
 He brought (since he could not refuse 'em)
 Some scraps of paper to amuse 'em.¹

An honest Pismire, warm with zeal,
 In justice to the public weal,
 Thus spoke :—"The nation's hoard is low ;
 From whence does this profusion flow ?
 I know our annual funds' amount ;
 Why such expense ? and where's the' account ?" ²

With wonted arrogance and pride,
 The Ant in office thus replied :
 "Consider, Sirs, were secrets told,
 How could the best-schemed projects hold ?
 Should we state-mysteries disclose,
 'Twould lay us open to our foes.
 My duty and my well-known zeal
 Bid me our present schemes conceal :
 But, on my honour, all the' expense
 (Though vast) was for the swarm's defence."

(1) A fair example of "cooked" state accounts. The late Lord Errol, alluding to the facile audacity with which these were prepared and vouched for, used to say, that "for any purpose of deception commend him to facts and figures !"

(2) This pismire is commended to the earnest attention of Mr. Joseph Hume.

They pass'd the' account as fair and just ;
And voted him implicit trust.

Next year again the granary drain'd,
He thus his innocence maintain'd :

“ Think how our present matters stand,
What dangers threat from every hand ;
What hosts of turkeys stroll for food,
No farmer's wife but hath her brood.
Consider, when invasion's near,
Intelligence must cost us dear ;
And, in this ticklish situation,
A secret told betrays the nation :
But on my honour, all the expense
(Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.”¹

Again, without examination,
They thank'd his sage administration.

The year revolves. Their treasure spent,
Again in secret service went :
His honour, too, again was pledged,
To satisfy the charge alleged.

When thus, with panic shame possess'd,
An auditor, his friends address'd :

“ What are we ? ministerial tools ?
We little knaves are greater fools.”²
At last this secret is explored,
’Tis our corruption thins the hoard.
For every grain we touch'd, at least,
A thousand, his own heaps, increased.
Then for his kin and favourite spies,
A hundred hardly could suffice.

(1) Speech of the Secretary at War in 1852.

(2) This “ tag,” is repeated “ usque ad nauseam.”

Thus for a paltry sneaking bribe,
 We cheat ourselves and all the tribe;
 For all the magazine contains,
 Grows from our annual toil and pains."

They vote th' account shall be inspected;
 The cunning plunderer is detected;
 The fraud is sentenced; and his hoard,
 As due, to public use restored.¹

(1) The "*auri sacra fames*" has been the upas-tree, beneath whose blight, virtue has waned, innocence suffered, and honesty and merit starved, from the period of the birth of Lord Peter's bulls (*vide* Swift's Tale of a Tub), whose roaring subsided, "*pulveris exigui jactu*," to the epoch of the "greatest, wisest, *meanest* of mankind," Lord Bacon, and—*later*. Hence the necessity of state intrigue and diplomatic falsehood, which after all afford but scant protection to the bewildered, grasping minister, against the outcries of the patriotic because *famished* place-hunters, who draw their eloquence from their disappointment, and their vehement invective upon venality, from their own craving need! Compare former speeches and characters, with those upon the scene now, and the only difference is that they figure in different days: nay more the staple commodity of their eloquence is the same, and if we took up a gazette or "broadside" of Anne, and placed it side by side with the *Times* newspaper, we should find that the country throughout has always been on the eve of destruction, money always requisite for defences, state arts quite as rife, ministerial excuses just as plausible, and premier, prelate, patriot, and parasite, equally "honourable" when there was nothing to lose, and equally supple when there was anything to gain!

"Can they not juggle, and, with slight
 Conveyance, play with wrong and right?
 Will not fear, favour, bribe, and grudge,
 The same case, several ways adjudge?"—HUDIBRAS.





THE BEAR IN A BOAT.

TO A COXCOMB.

THAT man must daily wiser grow,
Whose search is bent, himself to know.
Impartially he weighs his scope,
And on firm reason founds his hope ;
He tries his strength before the race,
And never seeks his own disgrace ;
He knows the compass, sail, and oar,
Or never launches from the shore ;
Before he builds, computes the cost,
And in no proud pursuit is lost ;

He learns the bounds of human sense,
 And safely walks within the fence.
 Thus, conscious of his own defect,
 Are pride and self-importance check'd.¹

If, then, self-knowledge to pursue,
 Direct our life in every view,
 Of all the fools that pride can boast,
 A Coxcomb claims distinction most.

Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind ;
 They're not to sex or age confined,
 Or rich or poor, or great or small,
 And vanity besets them all.
 By ignorance is pride increased ;
 Those most assume, who know the least ;
 Their own false balance gives them weight,
 But every other finds them light.²

Not that all Coxcombs' follies strike,
 And draw our ridicule alike.
 To different merits each pretends.
 This in love-vanity transcends ;
 That smitten with his face and shape,
 By dress distinguishes the ape ;
 T' other with learning crams his shelf,
 Knows books, and all things but himself.³

All these are fools of low condition,
 Compared with Coxcombs of ambition ;

(1) A good result, yet almost unattainable by the process ! "Nosmetipsos noscere difficillimum est." (Cicero.) Yet the poet is right, for the more self-knowledge, the greater humility !

(2) A coxcomb, rightly defined, is a self-deceiver, with whom the pronoun "I" is too much in the individual's and public eye.

(3) See Erasmus, "Praise of Folly," and College Tutors turned into parish priests, or Bishops made out of schoolmasters, by the sensible and judicious Minister !

For those, puff'd up with flattery, dare
 Assume a nation's various care.
 They ne'er the grossest praise mistrust,
 Their sycophants seem hardly just;
 For these, in part alone, attest
 The flattery their own thoughts suggest.
 In this wide sphere, a Coxcomb's shown
 In other realms besides his own:
 The self-deem'd Machiavel at large
 By turns controls in every charge.
 Does Commerce suffer in her rights?
 'Tis he directs the naval flights.
 What sailor dares dispute his skill?
 He'll be an admiral when he will.

Now, meddling in the soldier's trade,
 Troops must be hired, and levies made:
 He gives ambassadors their cue,
 His cobbled treaties to renew;
 And annual taxes must suffice
 The current blunders to disguise.
 When his crude schemes in air are lost,
 And millions scarce defray the cost,
 His arrogance (nought undismay'd),
 Trusting in self-sufficient aid,
 On other rocks misguides the realm,
 And thinks a pilot at the helm.
 He ne'er suspects his want of skill,
 But blunders on from ill to ill;¹
 And when he fails of all intent,
 Blames only unforeseen event.

(1) Now and then he lights upon a piece of "good luck," which of course he attributes to his peculiar skill. Thus Cleon took the credit of capturing the Spartan regiment in Sphacteria.—*Vide* Thucyd. Hist.

Lest you mistake the application,
The Fable calls me to relation.

A Bear of shag and manners rough,
At climbing trees expert enough—
For dext'rously, and safe from harm,
Year after year he robb'd the swarm :
Thus thriving on industrious toil,
He gloried in his pilfer'd spoil.

This trick so swell'd him with conceit,
He thought no enterprise too great.
Alike in sciences and arts
He boasted universal parts.
Pragmatic, busy, bustling, bold,
His arrogance was uncontroll'd :
And thus he made his party good,
And grew—dictator of the wood.

The beasts with admiration stare,
And think him a prodigious Bear.
Were any common booty got,
'Twas his, each portion to allot :
For why? he found there might be picking,
E'en in the carving of a chicken.
Intruding thus, he by degrees
Claim'd, too, the butcher's larger fees.
And now his overweening pride
In every province will preside :
No task too difficult was found,
His blundering nose misleads the hound,
In stratagem and subtle arts
He overrules the fox's parts.

It chanced as, on a certain day,
Along the bank he took his way,

A boat with rudder, sail, and oar,
At anchor floated near the shore.
He stopt, and turning to his train,
Thus pertly vents his vaunting strain:

“What blundering puppies are mankind,
In every science always blind!
I mock the pedantry of schools:
What are their compasses and rules?
From me, that helm shall conduct learn,
And man, his ignorance discern.”

So saying, with audacious pride
He gains the boat, and climbs the side.
The beasts, astonish'd, line the strand;
The anchor's weigh'd; he drives from land.
The slack sail shifts from side to side;
The boat untrimm'd admits the tide;
Borne down, adrift, at random tost,
His oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.
The Bear, presuming in his skill,
Is here, and there, officious still;
Till, striking on the dangerous sands,
Aground the shatter'd vessel stands.

To see the bungler thus distress—
The very fishes, sneer and jest;
E'en gudgeons join in ridicule,
To mortify the meddling fool.
The clamorous watermen appear—
Threats, curses, oaths, insult his ear:
Seized, thrash'd, and chain'd, he's dragg'd to land;
Derision shouts along the strand.¹

(1) Certain statesmen (as Sidney Smith remarked of one of them), have not so much endowment to qualify them for their office, as the absence of all moral

fear. "He," speaking of a certain lord, "would undertake the navigation of a ship though he was never at sea, preside over a steam-engine though perfectly ignorant of its construction, or take the surgeon's knife and attempt a most difficult operation." It is true, that the passengers might be swamped in the first case, be blown up in the second, or die under the third; but those contingencies are not taken into the account,—he would brave them all, simply because he has no moral fear.

Statesmanship must be very easy, when there appear so many practising that art, without study of it,—so many who, supplanting the interests of a nation by their own, sacrifice a whole people to their presumption and ignorance, and, like "fools, rush on, where angels fear to tread!"





THE SQUIRE AND HIS CUR.

TO A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

THE man of pure and simple heart
Through life disdains a double part ;
He never needs the screen of lies
His inward bosom to disguise.
In vain malicious tongues assail,
Let Envy snarl, let Slander rail ;
From Virtue's shield (secure from wound)
Their blunted, venom'd shafts rebound.

So shines his light before mankind,
 His actions prove his honest mind.
 If in his country's cause he rise,
 Debating senates to advise,
 Unbribed, unawed, he dares impart
 The honest dictates of his heart.
 No ministerial frown he fears,
 But in his virtue perseveres.¹

But would you play the politician,
 Whose heart's averse to intuition,
 Your lips at all times, nay, your reason,
 Must be controll'd by place and season.
 What statesman could his power support,
 Were lying tongues forbid the court?
 Did princely ears to truth attend,
 What minister could gain his end?
 How could he raise his tools to place,
 And how his honest foes, disgrace?

That politician tops his part,
 Who readily can lie with art:
 The man's proficient in his trade;
 His power is strong, his fortune's made.
 By that, the interest of the throne
 Is made subservient to his own:
 By that, have kings of old, deluded,
 All their own friends for his, excluded:
 By that, his selfish schemes pursuing,
 He thrives upon the public ruin.

(1)

"Justum et tenacem propositi virum
 Nec civium ardor, prava jubentium
 Nec vultus instantis tyranni .
 Mente quatit solidâ."—HOR.

Antiochus,¹ with hardy pace,
Provoked the dangers of the chase;
And, lost from all his menial train,
Traversed the wood, and pathless plain.
A cottage lodged the royal guest;
The Parthian clown brought forth his best;
The King, unknown, his feast enjoy'd,
And various chat, the hours employ'd.
From wine what sudden friendship springs!
Frankly they talk'd of courts and kings.

"We country-folks," the Clown replies,
"Could ope our gracious monarch's eyes.
The King, (as all our neighbours say,)
Might he (God bless him!) have his way,
Is sound at heart, and means our good,
And he would do it, if he could.
If truth in courts were not forbid,
Nor kings nor subjects, would be rid.
Were he in power we need not doubt him;
But that transferr'd to those about him,
On them he throws the regal cares;
And what mind they? Their own affairs.
If such rapacious hands he trust,
The best of men may seem unjust.
From kings to cobblers 'tis the same;
Bad servants wound their masters' fame.
In this our neighbours all agree:
Would the king knew as much as we!"
Here he stopt short. Repose they sought;
The Peasant slept, the Monarch thought.

(1) Plutarch.

The courtiers learn'd, at early dawn,
Where their lost sovereign was withdrawn.
The guards' approach our host alarms;
With gaudy coats the cottage swarms;
The crown and purple robes they bring,
And prostrate fall before the King.
The Clown was call'd; the royal guest
By due reward his thanks exprest.
The King then, turning to the crowd,
Who fawningly before him bow'd,
Thus spoke: "Since, bent on private gain,
Your counsels first misled my reign,
Taught and inform'd by you alone,
No truth the royal ear hath known,
Till here conversing—hence, ye crew!
For now I know myself and you."

Whene'er the royal ear's engrost,
State-lies but little genius cost;
The favourite then securely robs,
And gleans a nation by his jobs.
Franker and bolder grown in ill,
He daily poisons dares instil;
And, as his present views suggest,
Inflames or soothes the royal breast:
Thus wicked ministers oppress,
When oft the monarch means redress.

Would kings their private subjects hear,
A minister must talk with fear;
If honesty opposed his views,
He dared not innocence accuse;
'Twould keep him in such narrow bound,
He could not right and wrong confound.

Happy were kings, could they disclose
Their real friends and real foes!
Were both themselves and subjects known,
A monarch's will might be his own :
Had he the use of ears and eyes,
Knaves would no more be counted wise.
But then a minister might lose
(Hard case!) his own ambitious views.
When such as these have vex'd a state,
Pursued by universal hate,
Their false support at once hath fail'd,
And persevering truth prevail'd.
Exposed, their train of fraud is seen—
Truth will at last remove the screen.

A Country Squire, by whim directed,
The true stanch dogs of chase neglected ;
Beneath his board no hound was fed,
His hand ne'er stroked the spaniel's head.
A snappish Cur, alone carest,
By lies had banish'd all the rest :
Yap had his ear, and defamation
Gave him full scope of conversation.
His sycophants must be preferr'd,
Room must be made for all his herd :
Wherefore, to bring his schemes about,
Old faithful servants all must out.

The Cur on every creature flew,
(As other great men's puppies do,)
Unless due court to him were shown,
And both their face and business known,
No honest tongue an audience found—
He worried all the tenants round.

For why? he lived in constant fear,
Lest truth by chance should interfere.
If any stranger dared intrude,
The noisy Cur his heels pursued;
Now fierce with rage, now struck with dread,
At once he snarlèd, bit, and fled.
Aloof he bays, with bristling hair,
And thus in secret growls his fear:
"Who knows but Truth, in this disguise,
May frustrate my best-guarded lies?
Should she (thus mask'd) admittance find,
That very hour, my ruin's sign'd."

Now in his howl's continued sound,
Their words were lost, their voice was drown'd.
Ever in awe of honest tongues,
Thus every day he strain'd his lungs.

It happen'd, in ill-omen'd hour,
That Yap, unmindful of his power,
Forsook his post, to love inclin'd,
A favourite bitch was in the wind.
By her seduced, in amorous play,
They frisk'd the joyous hours away:
Thus by untimely love pursuing,
Like Antony he sought his ruin.

For now the Squire, unvex'd with noise,
An honest neighbour's chat, enjoys.
"Be free," says he, "your mind impart;
I love a friendly open heart.
Methinks my tenants shun my gate;
Why such a stranger grown of late?
Pray tell me what offence they find—
'Tis plain they're not so well inclined.

"Turn off your Cur," the Farmer cries,
 "Who feeds your ear with daily lies.
 His snarling insolence offends,—
 'Tis he that keeps you from your friends.
 Were but that saucy puppy checkt,
 You'd find again the same respect.
 Hear only him, he'll swear it too,
 That all our hatred is to you:
 But learn from us your true estate—
 'Tis that cursed Cur alone, we hate."

The Squire heard Truth. Now Yap rush'd in,
 The wide hall echoes with his din,
 Yet Truth prevail'd; and, with disgrace,
 The dog was cudgell'd out of place.¹

(1) The severest satire in the whole English language, is that by Swift, in his voyage to Laputa (*Gulliver's Travels*), upon the choice of their favourites by princes. "The professors in the school of political projectors," he says, "appeared wholly out of their senses. These unhappy people were proposing schemes for persuading monarchs to choose favourites upon the score of their wisdom, capacity, and virtue; of teaching the ministers to consult the public good; of rewarding merit, great abilities, and eminent services; of instructing princes to know their own true interest, by placing it on the same foundation with that of their people; of choosing for employments, persons qualified to exercise them; with many other wild, impossible, chimeras, that never entered before, into the heart of man to conceive."

The whole of this caustic irony is an applicable commentary upon the fable, and not Swift's "madness, but its conscience speaks," when humanity acknowledges the truth of it. After all, the condition of a lying courtier is somewhat irksome, for not only is his position precarious, but his penalty severe, since every one may call him a rogue, and he cannot deny it.





THE COUNTRYMAN AND JUPITER.

TO MYSELF.

HAVE you a friend (look round and spy)
So fond, so prepossess'd as I?
Your faults, so obvious to mankind,
My partial eyes could never find.
When, by the breath of Fortune blown,
Your airy castles were o'erthrown,
Have I been ever prone to blame,
Or mortified your hours with shame?

Was I e'er known to damp your spirit,
Or twit you with the want of merit?

'Tis not so strange that Fortune's frown
Still perseveres to keep you down:
Look round, and see what others do.
Would you be rich and honest too?
Have you (like those she raised to place)
Been opportunely, mean and base?
Have you (as times required), resign'd
Truth, honour, virtue, peace of mind?
If these are scruples, give her o'er;
Write, practise morals, and be poor.¹

The gifts of Fortune truly rate;
Then, tell me what would mend your state.
If happiness on wealth were built,
Rich rogues might comfort find, in guilt.
As grows the miser's hoarded store,
His fears, his wants, increase the more.

Think, GAY, (what ne'er may be the case,)
Should Fortune take you into grace,
Would that your happiness augment?
What can she give beyond content?

Suppose yourself a wealthy heir,
With a vast annual income clear!
In all the affluence you possess,
You might not feel one care the less.
Might you not, then, like others, find
With change of fortune, change of mind?

(1) Swift compares, in his Tale of a Tub, "honesty to an old pair of shoes cobbled out in the dirt."

"Thou knowest in the days of innocency Adam fell; and what shall poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of knavery?"—SHAKS. *Hen. IV.*

Perhaps, profuse beyond all rule,
 You might start out a glaring fool;
 Your luxury might break all bounds;
 Plate, table, horses, stewards, hounds,
 Might swell your debts; then, lust of play
 No regal income can defray.
 Sunk is all credit, writs assail,
 And doom your future life to jail.

Or were you dignified with power,
 Would that avert one pensive hour?
 You might give avarice its swing,
 Defraud a nation, blind a king;
 Then from the hirelings in your cause,
 Though daily fed with false applause,
 Could it a real joy impart?—
 Great guilt knew never joy at heart.

Is happiness your point in view?
 (I mean th' intrinsic and the true).
 She nor in camps nor courts, resides,
 Nor in the humble cottage, hides;
 Yet found alike in every sphere—
 Who finds content, will find her there.¹

(1) "All happiness is seated in content."—OTWAY, *C. Mar.*

"We barbarously call those bless'd
 Who are of largest tenements possess'd,
 While swelling coffers break their owners' rest.
 More truly happy those that can
 Govern the little empire, man,
 Bridle their passions, and direct their will,
 Through all the glitt'ring paths of charming ill;
 Who in a fix'd, unalterable state,
 Smile at the doubtful tide of fate,
 And scorn alike her friendship and her hate;
 Who poison, less than falsehood, fear,
 Loth to purchase life, so dear;
 But kindly for their friend embrace their death,
 And seal their country's love, with their departing breath."

P

STEPH. Hor.

O'erspent with toil, beneath the shade,
A Peasant rested on his spade :

"Good gods!" he cries, "'tis hard to bear
This load of life from year to year!
Soon as the morning streaks the skies,
Industrious Labour bids me rise ;
With sweat I earn my homely fare,
And every day renews my care."

Jove heard the discontented strain,
And thus rebuked the murmuring swain :

"Speak out your wants, then, honest friend :
Unjust complaints, the gods offend.
If you repine at partial Fate,
Instruct me what could mend your state.
Mankind in every station see—
What wish you? tell me what you'd be."

So said, upborne upon a cloud,
The Clown survey'd the anxious crowd.

"Yon face of Care," says Jove, "behold,
His bulky bags are fill'd with gold :
See with what joy he counts it o'er!
That sum to-day hath swell'd his store."
"Were I that man," the Peasant cried,
"What blessing could I ask beside?"

"Hold," says the god, "first learn to know
True happiness from outward show.
This optic glass of intuition—
Here, take it ; view his true condition."

He look'd, and saw the miser's breast
A troubled ocean, ne'er at rest ;
Want ever stares him in the face,
And fear anticipates disgrace.

With conscious guilt he saw him start,
Extortion gnaws his throbbing heart,
And never, or in thought or dream,
His breast admits one happy gleam.

“May Jove,” he cries, “reject my pray’r,
And guard my life from guilt and care!
My soul abhors that wretch’s fate—
Oh keep me in my humble state!
But see, amidst a gaudy crowd,
Yon minister so gay and proud;
On him what happiness attends,
Who thus rewards his grateful friends!”
“First take the glass,” the god replies;
“Man views the world with partial eyes.”

“Good gods!” exclaims the startled wight,
“Defend me from this hideous sight!
Corruption, with corrosive smart,
Lies cankering on his guilty heart.
I see him with polluted hand
Spread the contagion o’er the land.
Now Avarice with insatiate jaws,
Now Rapine with her harpy claws,
His bosom tears; his conscious breast
Groans, with a load of crimes oppress.
I see him, mad and drunk with power,
Stand tottering on Ambition’s tower.
Sometimes, in speeches vain and proud,
His boasts insult the nether crowd;
Now, seized with giddiness and fear,
He trembles lest his fall is near.

Was ever wretch like this?” he cries,
“Such misery in such disguise!

The change, O Jove! I disavow—
Still be my lot the spade and plough.”

He next, confirm'd by speculation,
Rejects the lawyer's occupation;
For he the statesman seem'd in part,
And bore similitude of heart.
Nor did the soldier's trade inflame
His hopes, with thirst of spoil and fame:
The miseries of war he mourn'd,
Whole nations into deserts turn'd.

By these have laws and rights been braved;
By these was free-born man enslaved:
When battles and invasion cease,
Why swarm they in the lands of peace?
“Such change,” says he, “may I decline—
The scythe, and civil arms, be mine!”

Thus, weighing life in each condition,
The Clown withdrew his rash petition.

When thus the god: “How mortals err!
If you true happiness prefer;
’Tis to no rank of life confined,
But dwells in every honest mind.
Be justice, then, your sole pursuit—
Plant virtue, and content’s the fruit.”

So Jove, to gratify the Clown,
Where first he found him, set him down.¹

(1) The prayer of Agur, the son of Jakeh, recorded in Prov. xxx. 8, touches upon most of the evils alluded to here. “Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me;” he also introduces the courtier, and the lawyer, when he says, “Remove from me vanity and lies.”

The former, added to “vexation of spirit,” comprehends, in Solomon’s idea, the sum total of human pleasure, and what can any one do, “after the king?” It is not that a man may not possess wealth, and yet be happy, but the natural

tendency of all excess is evil, and some professions necessarily engender it. Lord Chesterfield, disgusted with life, morosely declared his resolution, "to sleep in the carriage during the remainder of his journey:" the Duke of Athol, gorged with wealth, was thirty years a lunatic. Many have even felt disease, a boon, and a deliverance from worse cares. There is a crook in each one's lot, and here the wisest man is he, who bears the curse under which, we all live, with most equanimity, and, like Samson, to use a metaphor, extracts honey out of the carcase of the lion!





THE MAN, THE CAT, THE DOG, AND THE FLY.

TO MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

HAIL, happy land! whose fertile grounds
The liquid fence of Neptune bounds;
By bounteous Nature set apart,
The seat of Industry and Art.
O Britain! chosen port of trade,
May luxury ne'er thy sons invade!
May never minister (intent
His private treasures to augment)

Corrupt thy state!¹ If jealous foes
 Thy rights of commerce dare oppose,
 Shall not thy fleets their rapine awe?
 Who is't prescribes the ocean law?

Whenever neighbouring states contend,
 'Tis thine to be the general friend,
 What is't who rules in other lands?²
 On trade alone thy glory stands:
 That benefit is unconfined,
 Diffusing good among mankind:
 That first gave lustre to thy reigns,
 And scatter'd plenty o'er thy plains:
 'Tis that alone thy wealth supplies,
 And draws all Europe's envious eyes.
 Be commerce, then, thy sole design—
 Keep that, and all the world is thine.

When naval traffic ploughs the main,
 Who shares not in the merchant's gain?
 'Tis that supports the regal state,
 And makes the farmer's heart elate:
 The numerous flocks that clothe the land
 Can scarce supply the loom's demand;
 Prolific culture glads the fields,
 And the bare heath, a harvest yields.

Nature expects mankind should share
 The duties of the public care.
 Who's born for sloth?³ To some we find
 The ploughshare's annual toil assign'd;

(1) If the former fables be just, this apostrophe is very much like "shutting the stable door after the horse is stolen." It is, of course, like the expression, "happy land," employed before—a poetic fiction!

(2) This line, clearly, refers to a time when, the name of England, was respected, abroad.

(3) Barrow.

Some at the sounding anvil glow ;
Some the swift-sliding shuttle throw ;
Some, studious of the wind and tide,
From pole to pole, our commerce guide ;
Some (taught by industry) impart
With hands and feet, the works of art ;
While some, of genius more refined,
With head and tongue, assist mankind :
Each aiming at one common end,
Proves to the whole, a needful friend.
Thus, born each other's useful aid,
By turns, are obligations paid.

The monarch, when his table's spread,
Is to the clown, obliged for bread ;
And when in all his glory, drest,
Owes to the loom, his royal vest.
Do not the mason's toil and care,
Protect him from th' inclement air ?
Does not the cutler's art supply
The ornament, that guards his thigh ?
All these, in duty to the throne,
Their common obligations, own.
'Tis he (his own and people's cause)
Protects their properties and laws ;
Thus they their honest toil employ,
And with content, the fruits enjoy.
In every rank, or great or small,
'Tis industry supports us all.

The animals, by want oppress'd,
To man their services address'd ;
While each pursued their selfish good,
They hunger'd for precarious food :

Their hours with anxious cares were vex,
One day they fed, and starved the next.
They saw that plenty, sure and rife,
Was found alone in social life;
That mutual industry profess'd,
The various wants of man, redress'd.

The Cat, half-famished, lean, and weak,
Demands the privilege to speak.

"Well, Puss," says Man, "and what can you
To benefit the public, do?"

The Cat replies: "These teeth, these claws,
With vigilance shall serve the cause.
The mouse, destroy'd by my pursuit,
No longer shall your feasts pollute;
Nor rats, from nightly ambuscade,
With wasteful teeth, your stores invade."

"I grant," says Man, "to general use
Your parts and talents may conduce;
For rats and mice purloin our grain,
And threshers whirl the flail, in vain:
Thus shall the Cat, a foe to spoil,
Protect the farmer's honest toil."

Then turning to the Dog, he cried,
"Well, Sir, be next your merits tried."

"Sir," says the Dog, "by self-applause
We seem to own a friendless cause.
Ask those who know me, if distrust
E'er found me treacherous or unjust?
Did I e'er faith or friendship break?¹
Ask all those creatures, let them speak.

(1) Gay pronounced this word "break," no doubt with the provincialism of his county.

My vigilance and trusty zeal
 Perhaps might serve the public weal
 Might not your flocks in safety feed,
 Were I to guard the fleecy breed?
 Did I the nightly watches keep,
 Could thieves invade you, while you sleep?"

The Man replies: "Tis just and right,
 Rewards, such service, should requite.
 So rare in property, we find
 Trust uncorrupt, among mankind,
 That, taken in a public view,
 The first distinction is your due.
 Such merits all reward transcend:
 Be then my comrade and my friend."¹

Addressing now the Fly: "From you
 What public service can accrue?"
 "From me!" the fluttering insect said,
 "I thought you knew me better bred.
 Sir, I'm a gentleman. Is't fit
 That I to industry submit?
 Let mean mechanics, to be fed,
 By business, earn ignoble bread:
 Lost in excess of daily joys,
 No thought, no care, my life annoys.
 At noon (the lady's matin hour),
 I sip the tea's delicious flower;
 On cates luxuriously I dine,
 And drink the fragrance of the vine.
 Studious of elegance and ease,
 Myself alone, I seek to please."

(1) So Byron over his dog employs a suicidal satire:—

"To mark a friend's remains, these stones arise:
 I never knew but one—and here he lies."

The Man, his pert conceit, derides,
And thus the useless coxcomb, chides:

“Hence from that peach, that downy seat—
No idle fool deserves to eat.

Could you have sapp'd the blushing rind,
And on that pulp ambrosial, dined,

Had not some hand, with skill and toil,
To raise the tree, prepared the soil?

Consider, sot, what would ensue,
Were all such worthless things, as you.

You'd soon be forced (by hunger stung),
To make your dirty meals on dung,

On which such despicable need,
Unpitied, is reduced to feed.

Besides, vain, selfish, insect, learn
(If you can right and wrong discern),

That he who, with industrious zeal,
Contributes to the public weal,

By adding to the common good,
His own, hath rightly understood.”

So saying, with a sudden blow,
He laid the noxious vagrant low:

Crush'd in his luxury and pride,
The spunger on the public, died.¹

(1) A useless man is a cipher in existence, and nothing lower than a unit at least can be tolerated in life. The great aim of self-exertion and independence of spirit, is to convert one's own cipher into a power. Society, like nature, abhors a vacuum, and the listless idler is a vacuum.

Yet the fly—so erroneous is our superficial judgment—had he feed me, to plead his cause, should have not been so speedily condemned. Every creature has his use, and where would health be, or what would be the value of riches, without the public scavenger? Your fly is an unsworn commissioner of public sewers, and does his business much better than many who have taken the

oaths, simply because he puts his own nose to the evil, and removes it himself. He is also a noble instance of impartiality, for like death, he visits

"pauperum tabernas

Regumque turres."

Lastly, he reads man a good lesson in making the most of his brief day, springing at once into activity, and dying with "harness on his back." He loses no time in preparation for hours he may never see, nor in forebodings of evils he may never endure. He does not allow infancy with its helplessness, manhood with its disappointments, old age with its regrets, to subtract the minutes of his vitality, which are so precious, because they are so few!





THE JACKAL, LEOPARD, AND OTHER BEASTS.

TO A MODERN POLITICIAN.

I GRANT corruption sways mankind ;
That interest, too, perverts the mind ;
That bribes have blinded common sense,
Foil'd reason, truth, and eloquence :
I grant you, too, our present crimes
Can equal those of former times.
Against plain facts shall I engage,
To vindicate our righteous age ?

I know that in a modern fist,
Bribes, in full energy, subsist.
Since then these arguments prevail,
And itching palms are still so frail,
Hence politicians, you suggest,
Should drive the nail that goes the best ;
That it shows parts and penetration,
To ply men with the right temptation.

To this I humbly must dissent,
Premising, no reflection's meant.

Does justice, or the client's sense,
Teach lawyers, either side's defence?
The fee gives eloquence its spirit,
That only is the client's merit.
Does art, wit, wisdom, or address,
Obtain the prostitute's caress?
The guinea (as in other trades),
From every hand, alike persuades.
"Man," Scripture says, "is prone to evil ;"
But does that vindicate the devil?
Besides, the more mankind are prone,
The less the devil's parts are shown.
Corruption's not of modern date ;
It hath been tried in every state.
Great knaves of old their power have fenced,
By places, pensions, bribes, dispensed ;
By these they gloried in success,
And impudently dared oppress ;
By these despotic'ly they sway'd,
And slaves extoll'd the hand that paid ;
Nor parts nor genius were employ'd—
By these alone were realms destroy'd.

Now see these wretches in disgrace,
 Stript of their treasures, power, and place;
 View 'em abandon'd and forlorn,
 Exposed to just reproach, and scorn.
 What now is all your pride, your boast?
 Where are your slaves, your flattering host?
 What tongues now feed you with applause?
 Where are the champions of your cause?
 Now e'en that very fawning train,
 Which shared the gleanings of your gain,
 Press foremost who shall first accuse
 Your selfish jobs, your paltry views,
 Your narrow schemes, your breach of trust,
 And want of talents to be just.

What fools were these amidst their power!
 How thoughtless of their adverse hour!
 What friends were made? A hireling herd,
 For temporary votes preferr'd.
 Was it these sycophants to get,
 Your bounty swell'd a nation's debt?
 You're bit, for these, like Swiss, attend—
 No longer pay, no longer friend.¹

The lion is (beyond dispute)
 Allow'd the most majestic brute;
 His valour and his generous mind
 Prove him superior of his kind:

(1) Witness the fall of all great men, not only as with Cæsar, after death—
 "Now lies he there, and none so poor to do him reverence!"—
 but also upon their dismissal from power, whether it be Wolsey or Sejanus,
 the cry from all the satellites, who run from the setting sun to greet a newer
 planet, is—

"Curramus præcípites, et
 Dum jacet in ripâ, calcemus Cæsaris hostem."—*Juv. Sat. X.*

Yet to jackals (as 'tis averr'd)
Some lions have their power transferr'd,
As if the parts of pimps and spies
To govern forests, could suffice.

Once, studious of his private good,
A proud Jackal oppress'd the wood;
To cram his own insatiate jaws,
Invaded property and laws.
The forest groans with discontent,
Fresh wrongs the general hate, foment.
The spreading murmurs reach'd his ear;
His secret hours were vex'd with fear.
Night after night, he weighs the case,
And feels the terrors of disgrace.

"By friends," says he, "I'll guard my seat,
By those, malicious tongues defeat;
I'll strengthen power by new allies,
And all my clamorous foes, despise."

To make the generous beasts his friends,
He cringes, fawns, and condescends;
But those repuls'd his abject court,
And scorn'd oppression to support.
Friends must be had, he can't subsist—
Bribes shall new proselytes, enlist.
But these, nought weigh'd in honest paws;
For bribes, confess a wicked cause:
Yet think not every paw withstands
What hath prevail'd in human hands.

A tempting turnip's silver skin
Drew a base Hog through thick and thin:
Bought with a Stag's delicious haunch,
The mercenary Wolf was staunch:

The convert Fox grew warm and hearty,
 A pullet gain'd him to the party:
 The golden pippin in his fist,
 A chattering Monkey join'd the list.¹

But soon, exposed to public hate,
 The favourite's fall redress'd the state.
 The Leopard, vindicating right,
 Had brought his secret frauds to light.
 As rats, before the mansion falls,
 Desert late hospitable walls,
 In shoals the servile creatures run,
 To bow before the rising sun.

The Hog with warmth express'd his zeal,
 And was for hanging those that steal;
 But hoped, though low, the public hoard
 Might, half a turnip, still afford.
 Since saving measures were profest,
 A lamb's head, was the Wolf's request.
 The Fox submitted, if to touch
 A gosling would be deem'd too much?
 The Monkey thought his grin and chatter,
 Might ask a nut, or some such matter.

"Ye hirelings, hence!" the Leopard cries,
 "Your venal conscience I despise:
 He who the public good intends,
 By bribes, needs never purchase friends.
 Who acts this just, this open part,
 Is propt by every honest heart.
 Corruption now too late has show'd
 That bribes are always ill-bestowed:

(1) So true is it "that every one has his price" indeed, I find that the most sterling, certainly the most vociferous, virtue, is that which has never been tested.

By you, your bubbled master's taught,
Time-serving tools, not friends, are bought." ¹

(1) Dishonesty is always insecure, and the dealer with knaves ; for falsehood is never sure that these last have not, like Snake, in the "School for Scandal," "received a greater bribe for speaking the truth." The hypocrisy with which each venal rogue rails against wickedness, yet allows a "flat" to his own sins ; the severity, too, with which, as Lear says, "the usurer hangs the cozener," or attacks the very faults in another, which are rampant in self, are human to a hair, and now as ever,

"Clodius accusat mæchos, Catilina Cethegum."

Honesty, indeed, is the best policy in every case, but especially for courtiers and ministers of state, since the quality being least expected in them, would, when employed, serve to mask their designs, better than all the arts of deception, since who would ever suspect *them* of speaking the truth ?





THE DEGENERATE BEES.

TO THE REV. DR. SWIFT, DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S.

THOUGH courts the practice disallow,
A friend at all times I'll avow.
In politics I know 'tis wrong—
A friendship may be kept too long;
And what they call the prudent part,
Is to wear interest next the heart:
As the times take a different face,
Old friendships should to new, give place.

I know, too, you have many foes;
 That owning you, is sharing those;
 That every knave in every station,
 Of high and low denomination,
 For what you speak, and what you write,
 Dread you at once, and bear you spite.¹
 Such freedoms in your works are shown,
 They can't enjoy what's not their own.
 All dunces, too, in church and state,
 In frothy nonsense show their hate;²
 With all the petty scribbling crew,
 (And those pert sots are not a few,
 'Gainst you and Pope, their envy spurt:
 The booksellers alone are hurt.

Good gods! by what a powerful race
 (For blockheads may have power and place)
 Are scandals raised, and libels writ,
 To prove your honesty and wit!
 Think with yourself: those worthy men,
 You know, have suffer'd by your pen:
 From them you've nothing but your due.
 From hence, 'tis plain, your friends are few,
 Except myself, I know of none,
 Besides the wise and good alone.
 To set the case in fairer light,
 My Fable shall the rest recite,

(1) Censure is the tax which excellence pays for being eminent. How eager, also, envy is to make every hole, in one's coat, a rent, Swift knew well; but some of his foibles courted, as they merited, abhorrence.

(2) And servile dulness, gets on with the great, especially in the Church, far better than upright merit. Thin-skinned dunces, too, in power, hate satire, to use Sidney Smith's simile, for the same reason as "fleas detest tooth-combs," because they cannot escape it.

Which (though unlike our present state)
I, for the moral's sake, relate.

A Bee of cunning, not of parts,
Luxurious, negligent of arts,
Rapacious, arrogant, and vain,
Greedy of power, but more of gain,—
Corruption sow'd throughout the hive:
By petty rogues, the great ones thrive.

As power and wealth his views supplied,
'Twas seen in overbearing pride.
With him, loud impudence had merit;
The Bee of conscience wanted spirit;
And those who follow'd honour's rules,
Were laugh'd to scorn, for squeamish fools.
Wealth claim'd distinction, favour, grace,
And poverty alone, was base.
He treated industry with slight,
Unless he found his profit by't.
Rights, laws, and liberties, gave way,
To bring his selfish schemes in play.
The swarm forgot the common toil,
To share the gleanings of his spoil.

“ While vulgar souls, of narrow parts,
Waste life in low mechanic arts;
Let us,” says he, “ to genius born,
The drudgery of our fathers, scorn.
The Wasp and Drone, you must agree,
Live with more elegance, than we.
Like gentlemen, they sport and play;
No business interrupts the day:
Their hours to luxury, they give,
And nobly on their neighbours live.”

A stubborn Bee, among the swarm,
 With honest indignation warm,
 Thus from his cell with zeal replied :

“I slight thy frowns, and hate thy pride.
 The laws our native rights protect;
 Offending thee, I those respect.
 Shall luxury corrupt the hive,
 And none against the torrent strive?
 Exert the honour of your race;
 He builds his rise on your disgrace.
 ’Tis industry our state maintains;
 ’Twas honest toil and honest gains
 That raised our sires to power and fame—
 Be virtuous; save yourselves from shame.
 Know that in selfish ends pursuing,
 You scramble for the public ruin.”

He spoke; and, from his cell dismiss’d,
 Was insolently scoff’d and hiss’d:
 With him a friend or two resign’d,
 Disdaining the degenerate kind.

“These Drones,” says he, “these insects vile,
 (I treat ’em in their proper style,
 May, for a time, oppress the state:
 They own our virtue by their hate.
 By that, our merits they reveal,
 And recommend our public zeal;
 Disgraced by this corrupted crew,
 We’re honour’d by the virtuous few.”¹

(1) A galaxy of glorious intellect, not only surrounded Swift with the radiance of talent, but warmed him with the glow of friendship. Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, Sheridan, appear to have loved him in spite of his moroseness, and almost for his very weaknesses, whilst a whole country honoured “The Drapier” for his inflexible and exposure of court injustice. Swift’s letters are redolent of the very

essence of friendship, and, as humanity must have an outlet for its affections, so, in contrast to the "empoisoned venom of his blood," kindly association with a few congenial spirits, appears to have been

"———the fountain

From the which his current flow'd,"

or it had assuredly "dried up."

As to suffering for his boldness, this was not only Swift's case, but will ever be the fate of poor but proud intellects, who will not truckle to injustice, and cupidity, in high places. Merit has ever been a martyr, whether the penalty has been the sword or the fire—the oppressor, a corporation or an individual—the sufferer, a "Whiston" or a "Sir Thomas More." It is true that after many years are passed, and the sufferer buried, he will be called a hero, but his friends will leave him to fight the "battle of life" alone, except he be wealthy—then he will be considered a worthy man.

"Quantum habet nummi in arcâ, tantum habet fidei."



DEAN SWIFT.



THE PACK-HORSE AND THE CARRIER.

TO A YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

BEGIN, my Lord, in early youth,
To suffer, nay, encourage truth ;
And blame me not for disrespect,
If I the flatterer's style reject ;¹
With that, by menial tongues supplied,
You're daily cocker'd up in pride.

(1) It is not because a person abjures the practice of flattery that he is therefore more sincere : there are those in the world who declare they " cannot cog," they " cannot bend," and are all the while the veriest hypocrites of the pack.

The tree's distinguish'd by the fruit;
Be virtue, then, your first pursuit.
Set your great ancestors in view,
Like them deserve the title too;
Like them, ignoble actions scorn;
Let virtue prove you greatly born.

Though with less plate their side-board shone,
Their conscience always was their own;
They ne'er at levees meanly fawn'd,
Nor was their honour yearly pawn'd;
Their hands, by no corruption stain'd,
The ministerial bribe, disdain'd.
They served the crown with loyal zeal,
Yet, jealous of the public weal,
They stood, the bulwark of our laws,
And wore at heart, their country's cause.
By neither place, nor pension, bought,
They spoke and voted as they thought;
Thus did your sires adorn their seat,
And such alone, are truly great.¹

If you the paths of learning, slight,
You're but a dunce, in stronger light.
In foremost rank, the coward placed,
Is more conspicuously disgraced.
If you, to serve a paltry end,
To knavish jobs can condescend,
We pay you the contempt that's due;
In that, you have precedence too.

Whence had you this illustrious name?
From virtue and unblemish'd fame.

(1) This "golden age" was long before "Adam delved or Eve span,"—at present "nothing is new under the sun," not even chicanery.

By birth the name alone descends;
Your honour on your self depends:
Think not your coronet can hide
Assuming ignorance and pride.
Learning by study must be won.
'Twas ne'er entail'd from son to son;
Superior worth your rank requires,
For that, mankind reveres your sires:
If you degenerate from your race,
Their merits heighten your disgrace.

A Carrier, every night and morn,
Would see his horses eat their corn:
This sunk the hostler's vails, 'tis true,
But then his horses had their due.
Were we so cautious in all cases,
Small gain would rise from greater places.

The manger now had all its measure;
He heard the grinding teeth with pleasure,
When all at once confusion rung—
They snorted, jostled, bit, and flung.
A pack-horse turn'd his head aside,
Foaming, his eyeballs swell'd with pride.

"Good gods!" says he, "how hard's my lot!
Is then my high descent forgot?
Reduced to drudgery and disgrace,
(A life unworthy of my race)
Must I, too, bear the vile attacks
Of ragged scrubs and vulgar hacks?
See scurvy Roan, that brute ill-bred,
Dares from the manger, thrust my head!
Shall I, who boast a noble line,
On offals of these creatures, dine!

Kick'd by old Ball! so mean a foe!
My honour suffers by the blow.
Newmarket speaks my grandsire's fame,
All jockeys still revere his name;
There, yearly, are his triumphs told,
There all his massy plates enroll'd.
Whene'er led forth upon the plain,
You saw him with a livery train;
Returning, too, with laurels crown'd,
You heard the drums and trumpets sound.
Let it then, Sir, be understood,
Respect's my due, for I have blood."

"Vain-glorious fool!" the Carrier cried.
"Respect was never paid to pride.
Know 'twas thy giddy wilful heart
Reduced thee to this slavish part.
Did not thy headstrong youth disdain
To learn the conduct of the rein?
Thus coxcombs, blind to real merit,
In vicious frolics, fancy spirit.
What is 't to me by whom begot,
Thou restive, pert, conceited sot?
Your sires I reverence—'tis their due,
But, worthless fool, what's that to you?
Ask all the Carriers on the road,
They'll say thy keeping's ill bestow'd.
Then vaunt no more thy noble race,
That neither mends thy strength nor pace.
What profits me, thy boast of blood?
An ass hath more intrinsic good.
By outward show let's not be cheated;
An ass, should, like an ass, be treated." ¹

(1) A young noble once taunted a member of the House of Commons, with his

humble origin, reminding him that he had blacked his father's boots. "Well, Sir," was the truly great reply, "did I not do them well?" Cicero also was once sneered at by a patrician for his low origin: "You," said the scoffer, "are the *first* of your line." "And you," replied the great orator, "are the *last* of yours." Men of real merit are the last to depend upon their origin, the nobility of which, only infers a responsibility to maintain it, as its lowness demands individual exertion to lift it into notice. Nature has her peers, as fortune claims those to whom she gives adventitious title, and the greatest men have been of low original. Euripides was the son of a fruiterer, Virgil of a baker, Horace of a freed slave, Tamerlane of a shepherd, Rollin of a herdsman, Moliere of an upholsterer, Rousseau of a watchmaker, Ben Jonson of a mason, Shakspear of a woodman, Thomas More of a grocer—to say nothing of the worthies of the present day, in divinity, law, and physic. "The mind is the standard of the man," and the world does not buy a person's ancestors, but deals for his own worth: in fact, it not unfrequently happens with old lineages as with trees, that those branches which are the highest in the wood, are the first to show symptoms of decay!





PAN AND FORTUNE.

TO A YOUNG HEIR.

Soon as your father's death was known,
(As if th' estate had been their own,)
The gamesters outwardly exprest
The decent joy within your breast ;
So lavish in your praise they grew,
As spoke their certain hopes in you.

One counts your income of the year,
How much in ready money clear.

"No house," says he, "is more complete
The garden's elegant and great.
How fine the park around it lies!
The timber's of a noble size!
Then count his jewels and his plate!
Besides, 'tis no entail'd estate.
If cash run low, his lands in fee
Are, or for sale or mortgage, free."

Thus they, before you threw the main,
Seem to anticipate their gain.

Would you, when thieves are known abroad,
Bring forth your treasures in the road?
Would not the fool abet the stealth,
Who rashly thus exposed his wealth?
Yet this you do whene'er you play
Among the gentlemen of prey.

Could fools to keep their own, contrive,
On what, on whom, could gamesters thrive?
Is it in charity, you game,
To save your worthy gang from shame?
Unless you furnish'd daily bread,
Which way could idleness be fed?¹
Could these professors of deceit,
Within the law, no longer cheat,
They must run bolder risks for prey,
And strip the traveller on the way.
Thus in your annual rents they share,
And 'scape the noose from year to year.

Consider, e'er you make the bet,
That sum might cross your tailor's debt;

(1) Johnson used to observe that "Extravagance had this good result, that it diffused wealth, which ultimately encouraged industry." The crime of it is, that it *directly* feeds sloth, knavery, and folly.

When you the pilfering rattle shake,
 Is not your honour, too, at stake?
 Must you not, by mean lies, evade
 To-morrow's duns, from every trade?
 By promises so often paid,
 Is yet your tailor's bill defray'd?
 Must you not pitifully fawn
 To have your butcher's writ, withdrawn?
 This must be done.¹ In debts of play,
 Your honour suffers no delay;
 And not this year's and next year's rent
 The sons of Rapine can content.

Look round; the wrecks of play behold;
 Estates dismember'd, mortgaged, sold!
 Their owners now to jails confined,
 Show equal poverty of mind.
 Some, who the spoil of knaves were made,
 Too late, attempt to learn their trade.
 Some, for the folly of one hour,
 Become the dirty tools of power,
 And, with the mercenary list,
 Upon court charity, subsist.²

You'll find at last this maxim true—
 Fools are the game, which knaves pursue.

The forest (a whole century's shade),
 Must be one wasteful ruin made:
 No mercy's shown to age or kind—
 The general massacre is sign'd.

(1) "Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se
 Quam quod ridiculos homines facit."—JUVENAL.

(2) See Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*, for a vivid commentary upon this description.

The park, too, shares the dreadful fate:
 For duns grow louder at the gate.
 Stern duns, obedient to the squire,
 (What will not barbarous hands for hire!)
 With brawny arms repeat the stroke;
 Fall'n are the elm and reverend oak.
 Through the long wood, loud axes sound.
 And Echo groans with every wound.

To see the desolation spread,
 Pan drops a tear, and hangs his head:
 His bosom now with fury burns,
 Beneath his hoof, the dice he spurns.
 Cards, too, in peevish passion torn,
 The sport of whirling winds, are borne.

"To snails, inveterate hate I bear,
 Who spoil the verdure of the year;
 The caterpillar I detest,
 The blooming Spring's voracious pest;
 The locust, too, whose ravenous band
 Spreads sudden famine o'er the land;
 But what are these? The dice's throw
 At once, hath laid a forest low.¹
 The cards are dealt, the bet is made,
 And the wide park hath lost its shade.
 Thus is my kingdom's pride defaced,
 And all its ancient glories waste.
 All this," he cries, "is Fortune's doing:
 'Tis thus she meditates my ruin.
 By Fortune, that false, fickle jade!
 More havoc in one hour is made,

(1) Smith, the author of "Gaieties and Gravities," defines dice "Playthings which the devil sets in motion, when he wants a new supply of knaves, beggars, and suicides."

Than all the hungry insect-race,
Combined, can in an age deface."

Fortune, by chance, who near him past,
O'erheard the vile aspersion cast :

"Why, Pan," says she, "what's all this rant ?

'Tis every country-bubble's cant.

Am I the patroness of vice ?

Is't I who cog or palm the dice ?

Did I the shuffling art reveal,

To mark the cards, or range the deal ?

In all th' employments men pursue,

I mind the least, what gamesters do.

There may (if computation's just)

One, now and then, my conduct trust.

I blame the fool, for what can I,

When ninety-nine, my power defy ?

These trust alone, their fingers' ends,

And not one stake, on me, depends.

Whene'er the gaming-board is set,

Two classes of mankind are met ;

But if we count the greedy race,

The knaves, fill up the greater space.

'Tis a gross error, held in schools,

That Fortune always favours fools.

In play, it never bears dispute ;

That doctrine, these fell'd oaks confute.

Then why to me, such rancour show ?

'Tis Folly, Pan, that is thy foe.

By me, his late estate he won,

But he by Folly, was undone."

(1) So infatuated is the mind by itself, that, so long as it can throw blame upon physical or moral constitution, peculiarity of circumstances, or even upon

that ghost of a subterfuge, Fortune, it will attribute to each, or all, of these, the results of its own folly. Yet of all persons most to be pitied, he who is styled, "a man of fortune," is entitled to our commiseration, when we consider the vastness of his responsibilities, and the insidiousness of his temptations. Released from the necessity of employing the body, or mind, he loses the two great elements of happiness, and health. He is surrounded by sycophants he cannot trust, and by seductions he can hardly repel; with everything to fear, he has nothing to hope, and pays by the anxiety of his mind, a heavy interest, for the wealth which surfeits his spirit. The gifts of fortune, as Terence remarks, depend for good or ill upon the disposition of the possessors:

"—Hæc perinde sunt ut illius animus qui ea possidet,

Qui uti scit, ei bona; illi qui non utitur recte, mala."—HÆAUT. I. iii. 21.

Should the young heir, in search of stimulant to fill up the "ennui" of prosperity, enter upon gambling, the race is soon run through the different courses of recklessness, mortgage, embarrassment, insolvency, despair. The vice grows more rooted, as the game becomes more fearfully important—"insomuch," as old George Whetstone observes, speaking of the prevalency of gaming in Elizabeth's time, "I heard a distemperate dicer solemnly sweare, that he faithfully believed, that dice were first made of the bones of a witch, and cards of her skin, in which there hath ever sithence remained an enchantment, yt whosoever once taketh delight in either, he shall never have power utterly to leave them." *Vide* "The Enemie to Unthriftinesse," 1586.





PLUTUS, CUPID, AND TIME:

Of all the burdens man must bear,
Time, seems most galling and severe:
Beneath this grievous load oppress'd,
We daily meet some friend distress'd.

“What can one do? I rose at nine:
’Tis full six hours before we dine:
Six hours! no earthly thing to do!
Would I had dozed in bed till two.”

A pamphlet is before him spread,
And almost half a page is read;

Tired with the study of the day,
The fluttering sheets are toss'd away;
He opens his snuff-box, hums an air,
Then yawns, and stretches in his chair.

"Not twenty, by the minute hand!
Good gods!" says he, "my watch must stand!
How muddling 'tis on books to pore!
I thought I'd read an hour or more.
The morning, of all hours, I hate:
One can't contrive to rise too late."

To make the minutes faster run,
Then, too, his tiresome self to shun,
To the next coffee-house he speeds,
Takes up the news—some scraps he reads.
Sauntering from chair to chair, he trails;
Now drinks his tea, now bites his nails.
He spies a partner of his woe,
By chat, afflictions lighter grow;
Each other's grievances they share,
And thus their dreadful hours compare.

Says Tom, "Since all men must confess
That time lies heavy, more or less,
Why should it be so hard to get,
Till two, a party at piquet?
Play might relieve the lagging morn:
By cards, long wintry nights are borne.
Does not quadrille amuse the fair,
Night after night, throughout the year?
Vapours and spleen forgot, at play
They cheat uncounted hours away."

"My case," says Will, "then must be hard,
By want of skill from play debarr'd.

Courtiers kill time by various ways ;
Dependance wears out half their days.
How happy these, whose time ne'er stands !
Attendance takes it off their hands.
Were it not for this cursed shower,
The Park had whiled away an hour.
At court, without or place or view,
I daily lose an hour or two,
It fully answers my design,
When I have pick'd up friends to dine ;
The tavern makes our burden light—
Wine puts our time and care to flight.
At six (hard case !) they call to pay.
Where can one go ? I hate the play.
From six till ten ! unless in sleep,
One cannot spend the hours so cheap.
The comedy's no sooner done
But some assembly is begun ;
Loitering from room to room, I stray,
Converse, but nothing hear or say :
Quite tired, from fair to fair I roam—
So soon ! I dread the thoughts of home.
From thence, to quicken slow-paced Night,
Again my tavern-friends invite :
Here, too, our early mornings pass,
Till drowsy sleep retards the glass.”
Thus they their wretched life bemoan,
And make each other's case, their own.
Consider, friends, no hour rolls on
But something of your grief is gone.
Were you to schemes of business bred,
Did you the paths of learning tread,

Your hours, your days would fly too fast ;
 You'd then regret the minute past.
 Time's fugitive and light as wind !¹
 'Tis indolence that clogs your mind.
 That load from off your spirits shake,
 You'll own and grieve for your mistake.
 Awhile, your thoughtless spleen suspend,
 Then read, and (if you can) attend.

As Plutus, to divert his care,
 Walk'd forth one morn to take the air,
 Cupid o'ertook his strutting pace.
 Each stared upon the stranger's face,
 Till recollection set them right,
 For each knew t' other but by sight.
 After some complimentary talk,
 Time met them, bow'd, and join'd their walk :
 Their chat on various subjects ran,
 But most, what each had done for man.
 Plutus assumes a haughty air,
 Just like our purse-proud fellows here :
 "Let kings," says he, "let cobblers tell,
 Whose gifts among mankind excel.
 Consider courts ; what draws their train ?
 Think you 'tis loyalty, or gain ?
 That statesman hath the strongest hold,
 Whose tool of politics is gold."²
 By that, in former reigns, 'tis said,
 The knave in power hath senates led :

(1) A very terse and striking allusion to the perishableness and record, of the hours, is upon the sun-dial at Gloucester Cathedral, "*Pereunt et imputantur!*"

(2) "*Quantum quisque sua nummorum servat in arca
 Tantum habet et fidei.*"—JUVENAL, Sat. iii.

By that alone, he sway'd debates,
 Enrich'd himself, and beggar'd states.¹
 Forego your boast. You must conclude
 That's most esteem'd, that's most pursued.
 Think, too, in what a woful plight
 That wretch must live whose pocket's light.
 Are not his hours by want deprest?
 Penurious care corrodes his breast:
 Without respect, or love, or friends,
 His solitary day descends."²

"You might," says Cupid, "doubt my parts,
 My knowledge, too, in human hearts,
 Should I the power of gold dispute,
 Which great examples might confute.
 I know, when nothing else prevails,
 Persuasive money seldom fails;
 That beauty, too, (like other wares,)
 Its price, as well as conscience, bears.
 Then marriage (as of late profess'd)
 Is but a money-job at best.
 Consent, compliance, may be sold;
 But love's beyond the price of gold.
 Smugglers there are who, by retail,
 Expose what they call love to sale;
 Such bargains are an arrant cheat:
 You purchase flattery and deceit.
 Those who true love have ever tried,
 (The common cares of life supplied,)
 No wants endure, no wishes make,
 But every real joy partake.

- (1) "For money is the only pow'r
 That all mankind fall down before."—HUDIBRAS.
 (2) The greatest sin in the world's sight is—poverty.

All comfort in themselves depends ;
 They want not power, nor wealth, nor friends,
 Love, they hold every thing in store ;
 The friendship, and the something more.
 Each other every wish they give :
 Not to know love, is not to live."

"Or love, or money," Time replied,
 "Were men the question to decide,
 Would bear the prize: on both intent,
 My hour's neglected or mis-spent.
 'Tis I who measure vital space,
 And deal out years to human race.
 Though little prized, and seldom sought,
 Without me, love and gold are nought.
 How does the miser, time employ ?
 Did I e'er see him life enjoy !
 By me, forsook, the hoards he won
 Are scatter'd by his lavish son.
 By me, all useful arts are gain'd ;
 Wealth, learning, wisdom, is attain'd.
 Who, then, would think (since such my power),
 That e'er I knew an idle hour ?
 So subtle and so swift I fly,
 Love's not more fugitive than I.
 Who hath not heard coquettes complain
 Of days, months, years, mis-spent in vain ?
 For time misused, they pine and waste,
 And love's sweet pleasures never taste.
 Those who direct their time aright,
 If love or wealth their hopes excite,
 In each pursuit, fit hours employ'd,
 And both by Time have been enjoy'd.

How heedless, then, are mortals grown !
 How little is their interest known !
 In every view they ought to mind me,
 For when once lost, they never find me."

He spoke. The gods no more contest,
 And his superior gift confest,
 That Time (when truly understood)
 Is the most precious earthly good. ¹

(1) The most apposite commentary upon the preceding fable, perhaps, occurs in the 316th No. of the *Spectator*, which I quote from as follows:—

"Indolence is a stream which flows slowly on, but yet undermines the foundation of every virtue. A vice of a more lively nature were a more desirable tyrant than this rust of the mind, which gives a tincture of its nature to every action of one's life. Death brings all persons back to an equality, and this image of it, this slumber of the mind, leaves no difference between the greatest genius, and the meanest understanding.

"To-morrow is still the fatal time when all is to be rectified: to-morrow comes, it goes, and still I please myself with the shadow, whilst I lose the reality; unmindful that the present time alone is ours, the future is yet unborn, and the past is dead, and can only live, as parents in their children, in the actions it has produced.

"The time we live, ought not to be computed by the number of years, but by the use that has been made of it; thus, it is not the extent of ground, but the yearly rent, which gives the value to the estate. Wretched and thoughtless creatures, in the only place where covetousness were a virtue, we turn prodigals!"

Alas! how many are there (to quote the splendid image of one of our newest and most promising poets, Alexander Smith) who have

——no heart to grasp the fleeting hour,
 Which, like a thief, steals by with silent foot,
 In his closed hand, the jewel of a life!"





**THE OWL, THE SWAN, THE COCK, THE SPIDER, THE ASS,
AND THE FARMER.**

TO A MOTHER.

CONVERSING with your sprightly boys,
Your eyes have spoke the Mother's joys.
With what delight I've heard you quote
Their sayings in imperfect note!

I grant, in body and in mind
Nature appears profusely kind.
Trust not to that. Act you your part;
Imprint just morals on their heart;

Impartially their talents scan :
Just education forms the man.

Perhaps (their genius yet unknown)
Each lot of life's already thrown ;
That this shall plead, the next shall fight,
The last assert the church's right.
I censure not the fond intent ;
But how precarious is th' event !
By talents misapplied and crost,
Consider, all your sons are lost.

One day (the tale's by Martial penn'd)
A Father thus address'd his friend :
"To train my boy, and call forth sense,
You know I've stuck at no expense.
I've tried him in the several arts
(The lad, no doubt, hath latent parts) ;
Yet trying all, he nothing knows,
But, crab-like, rather backward goes.
Teach me what yet remains undone—
'Tis your advice shall fix my son."
"Sir," says the friend, "I've weigh'd the matter ;
Excuse me, for I scorn to flatter :
Make him (nor think his genius check'd)
A herald, or an architect."

Perhaps (as commonly 'tis known)
He heard th' advice, and took his own.

The boy wants wit ; he's sent to school,
Where learning but improves the fool :¹
The college next must give him parts,
And cram him with the liberal arts.

(1) See Cowper's "Tirocinium, or Review of Schools."

Whether he blunders at the bar,
 Or owes his infamy to war,
 Or if by licence or degree
 The sexton share the doctor's fee;
 Or from the pulpit by the hour
 He weekly floods of nonsense pour,
 We find (th' intent of Nature foil'd)
 A tailor or a butcher spoil'd.

Thus ministers have royal boons
 Conferr'd on blockheads and buffoons;
 In spite of nature, merit, wit,
 Their friends for every post were fit.

But now let every Muse confess
 That merit finds its due success.
 Th' examples of our days regard;
 Where's virtue seen without reward?
 Distinguish'd, and in place, you find
 Desert and worth of every kind.
 Survey the reverend bench, and see
 Religion, learning, piety:¹
 The patron, ere he recommends,
 Sees his own image in his friend's.
 Is honesty disgraced and poor?²
 What is't to us what was before?

We all of times corrupt have heard,
 When paltry minions were preferr'd;
 When all great offices, by dozens,
 Were fill'd by brothers, sons, and cousins.
 What matter ignorance and pride?
 The man was happily allied.

(1) Ironically, of course.

(2) The passage here noted recalls Pope's line:

"Praise undeserved is censure in disguise."

Provided that his clerk was good,
What though he nothing understood?
In church and state, the sorry race
Grew more conspicuous fools, in place.
Such heads, as then, a treaty made,
Had bungled in the cobbler's trade.

Consider, patrons, that such elves
Expose your folly with themselves.
'Tis yours, as 'tis the parent's care,
To fix each genius in its sphere.
Your partial hand can wealth dispense,
But never give a blockhead sense.

An Owl of magisterial air,
Of solemn voice, of brow austere,
Assumed the pride of human race,
And bore his wisdom in his face;
Not to depreciate learned eyes,
I've seen a pedant look as wise.

Within a barn, from noise retired,
He scorn'd the world, himself admired;
And, like an ancient sage, conceal'd
The follies public life reveal'd.

Philosophers of old, he read,
Their country's youth to science bred;
Their manners form'd for every station,
And destined each his occupation.
When Xenophon, by numbers braved,
Retreated, and a people saved,¹
That laurel was not all his own;
The plant by Socrates was sown.

(1) The retreat of the ten thousand Greeks under Xenophon, after the defeat of Cyrus.

To Aristotle's greater name
The Macedonian owed his fame.¹

The Athenian bird, with pride replete,
Their talents equall'd in conceit ;
And, copying the Socratic rule,
Set up for master of a school.
Dogmatic jargon learnt by heart,
Trite sentences, hard terms of art,
To vulgar ears seem'd so profound,
They fancied learning in the sound.²

The school had fame ; the crowded place
With pupils swarm'd of every race.
With these the Swan's maternal care
Had sent her scarce-fledged cygnet heir ;
The Hen (though fond and loth to part)
Here lodged the darling of her heart ;
The Spider, of mechanic kind,
Aspired to science more refined ;
The Ass learnt metaphors and tropes,
But most on music fix'd his hopes.

The pupils now, advanced in age,
Were call'd to tread life's busy stage ;
And to the Master 'twas submitted,
That each might to his part be fitted.

"The Swan," says he, "in arms shall shine ;
The soldier's glorious toil be thine.
The Cock shall mighty wealth attain—
Go, seek it on the stormy main.

(1) Alexander the Great, concerning whose birth Philip his father said, that that event itself caused him less pleasure, than its occurrence at a time when he could have Aristotle for his instructor.

(2) *Vide* Hudibras, pt. i. ch. 1. l. 110.

The court shall be the Spider's sphere:
 Power, fortune, shall reward him there.
 In music's art the Ass's fame
 Shall emulate Corelli's name."

Each took the part that he advised,
 And all were equally despised.
 A Farmer, at his folly moved,
 The dull preceptor thus reproved:

"Blockhead," says he, "by what you've done,
 One would have thought 'em each your son;
 For parents, to their offspring blind,
 Consult nor parts nor turn of mind,
 But e'en in infancy decree
 What this, what t'other son shall be.
 Had you with judgment weigh'd the case,
 Their genius thus had fix'd their place;
 The Swan had learnt the sailor's art;
 The Cock had play'd the soldier's part;
 The Spider in the weaver's trade
 With credit had a fortune made;
 But for the fool, in every class
 The blockhead had appear'd an Ass."¹

(1) "Knowledge," says Montaigne, "is an excellent drug, but no drug has virtue enough to preserve from corruption and decay, if the vessel be tainted and impure wherein it is put to keep. Plato's principal institution in his Republic is to fit his citizens in the employments suitable to their nature. Cripples are very unfit for exercises of the body, and lame souls for exercises of the mind. Degenerate and vulgar souls are unworthy of philosophy. Experience often presents us with a physician worse physicked, a divine worse reformed, and most frequently a scholar of less sufficiency than another."

His celebrated essay upon the education of children (ch. xxv.) is of course too long to be even condensed effectually here; he regards the culture of the young "as the greatest and most important difficulty of human science," but confesses the "symptoms of their inclinations are so obscure, as to render it very hard, to establish any solid judgment upon them." Doubtless it is owing to these causes, and the few lines into which, human intellect can be driven, to

become *lucrative*, (for this is the main speculation,) that we deal with young minds by the gross, and with their education by the hundred, sacrificing individuality to general rules, and stretching or cramping personal mental growth, upon the Procrustean bed, of a prescribed scholastic system. And what is the result? Why, that each really great mind has, after it has left school, to unteach itself habits it ought never to have contracted, and to study subjects it ought there to have learned; and this to the loss of its time, its energy, and its freshness of power, so that he who survives to reach the altitude of distinction, is obliged to confess that his mind has not been justly dealt by, and that he is not what he might have been.

As to the choice of professions, indeed, the case is lamentable. A lawyer, having successfully shorn the public, forces his son to adopt the profitable disgrace which, his soul, more ingenuous, abhors, longing, it may be, for the prosecution of scientific truth; the surgeon goads on his young lancet, to operations, the latter would rather endure than perform; whilst the bishop, thinking nothing of sacrificing the interests of whole parishes, hurries his infantine prebend into the Church, there to trade for promotion with souls, when the youngster might have conducted a similar, though more honest business, in knocking down lots to the best bidder, as a tolerable auctioneer!





THE COOK-MAID, THE TURNSPIT, AND THE OX.

TO A POOR MAN.

CONSIDER man in every sphere,
Then tell me, is your lot severe?
'Tis murmur, discontent, distrust,
That makes you wretched. God is just!
I grant that hunger must be fed,
That toil, too, earns thy daily bread.
What then? Thy wants are seen and known,
But every mortal feels his own.

We're born a restless, needy crew:
Show me the happier man than you.

Adam, though blest above his kind,
For want of social woman, pined.
Eve's wants the subtle serpent saw—
Her fickle taste transgress'd the law:
Thus fell our sires, and their disgrace
The curse entail'd on human race.

When Philip's son, by glory led,
Had, o'er the globe, his empire spread;
When altars to his name were dress'd,
That he was man, his tears confess'd.

The hopes of avarice are check'd:
The proud man always wants respect.
What various wants on power attend!
Ambition never gains its end.
Who hath not heard the rich complain
Of surfeits and corporeal pain?
He, barr'd from every use of wealth,
Envies the ploughman's strength and health.
Another, in a beauteous wife
Finds all the miseries of life:
Domestic jars and jealous fear
Imbitter all his days with care.¹
This wants an heir—the line is lost:
Why was that vain entail engross'd?
Canst thou discern another's mind?
What is't you envy? Envy's blind.
Tell Envy, when she would annoy,
That thousands want what you enjoy.

(1) The Greek proverb is, that he who marries a beauteous wife, finds her either *κοινή* or *ποινή*.

“The dinner must be dish’d at one.
Where’s this vexatious Turnspit gone?
Unless the skulking Cur is caught,
The sirloin’s spoil’d, and I’m in fault.”
Thus said, (for sure you’ll think it fit
That I the Cook-maid’s oaths omit,)
With all the fury of a cook,
Her cooler kitchen, Nan forsook.
The broomstick o’er her head she waves;
She sweats, she stamps, she puffs, she raves;
The sneaking Cur before her flies,
She whistles, calls, fair speech she tries:
These nought avail. Her choler burns;
The fist and cudgel threat by turns:
With hasty stride she presses near;
He slinks aloof, and howls with fear.

“Was ever Cur so cursed!” he cried;
“What star did at my birth preside!
Am I for life by compact bound
To tread the wheel’s eternal round?
Inglorious task! of all our race
No slave is half so mean and base.
Had Fate a kinder lot assign’d,
And form’d me of the lap-dog kind,
I then, in higher life employ’d,
Had indolence and ease enjoy’d;
And, like a gentleman, caress’d,
Had been the lady’s favourite guest.
Or were I sprung from spaniel line,
Was his sagacious nostril, mine,
By me, their never-erring guide,
From wood and plain their feasts supplied,

Knights, squires, attendant on my pace,
Had shared the pleasures of the chase.
Endued with native strength and fire,
Why call'd I not the lion, sire?
A lion! such mean views I scorn—
Why was I not of woman born?
Who dares with reason's power contend?
On man, we brutal slaves, depend:
To him, all creatures, tribute pay,
And luxury employs his day."

An Ox by chance o'erheard his moan,
And thus rebuked the lazy drone:

"Dare you at partial Fate repine?
How kind's your lot compared with mine!
Decreed to toil, the barbarous knife
Hath sever'd me from social life;
Urged by the stimulating goad,
I drag the cumbrous waggon's load.
'Tis mine to tame the stubborn plain,
Break the stiff soil, and house the grain;
Yet I without a murmur bear
The various labours of the year.
But then, consider, that one day
(Perhaps the hour's not far away)
You, by the duties of your post,
Shall turn the spit when I'm the roast;
And for reward shall share the feast—
I mean, shall pick my bones at least."

"Till now," th' astonish'd Cur replies,
"I look'd on all with envious eyes.
How false we judge by what appears!
All creatures feel their several cares.

If thus yon mighty beast complains,
 Perhaps man knows superior pains.
 Let envy, then, no more torment :
 Think on the Ox, and learn content."

Thus said, close following at her heel,
 With cheerful heart he mounts the wheel.¹

(1) The moral of the fable is contained in the third and fourth lines of the opening verse:—

"'Tis murmur, discontent, distrust,
 That makes you wretched : God is just"—

an observation often admitted, seldom retained. Dryden well says :

" All great souls still make their own content.

We to ourselves may all our wishes grant ;

For nothing coveting, we nothing want."

To the real Christian there is no thought so consolatory as that all things having been primarily arranged by, so ever still depend upon, one infallible Goodness ; and that, however remote the veins of existence may ramify throughout the various kinds of beings, they are all connected with one great Fountain-soul, which is cognizant by Omniscient sympathy with even an insect's throb of pain ! " Trust in God," therefore, but especially that trust which springs from habitual communion with Him, is the only anodyne to human sorrow ; and discontent at our lot, is equally unjust to Him, " whose goodness is over all His works," as it is injurious to ourselves, since it bars the arrow of misfortune, and makes the mind its own tormentor.





THE RAVENS, THE SEXTON, AND THE EARTH-WORM.

TO LAURA.

LAURA, methinks you're over-nice,
True, flattery is a shocking vice;
Yet sure, whene'er the praise is just,
One may commend without disgust.
Am I a privilege denied,
Indulged by every tongue beside?

How singular are all your ways!
A woman, and averse to praise!
If 'tis offence such truths to tell,
Why do your merits thus excel?

Since, then, I dare not speak my mind,
A truth conspicuous to mankind;
Though in full lustre every grace
Distinguish your celestial face;
Though beauties of inferior ray
(Like stars before the orb of day)
Turn pale and fade; I check my lays,
Admiring, what I dare not praise.

If you the tribute due, disdain,
The Muse's mortifying strain
Shall, like a woman in mere spite,
Set beauty in a moral light.

Though such revenge might shock the ear
Of many a celebrated fair,
I mean that superficial race
Whose thoughts ne'er reach beyond their face,
What's that to you? I but displease
Such ever-girlish ears as these.
Virtue can brook the thoughts of age,
That lasts the same through every stage.
Though you by time must suffer more
Than ever woman lost before,
To age is such indifference shown,
As if your face were not your own.
Were you by Antoninus taught?
Or is it native strength of thought
That thus, without concern or fright,
You view yourself by Reason's light?

Those eyes, of so divine a ray,
 What are they? mouldering, mortal clay.¹
 Those features, cast in heavenly mould,
 Shall, like my coarser earth, grow old;
 Like common grass, the fairest flower
 Must feel the hoary season's power.

How weak, how vain is human pride!²
 Dares man upon himself confide!
 The wretch who glories in his gain,
 Amasses heaps on heaps in vain.
 Why lose we life in anxious cares,
 To lay in hoards for future years?
 Can those (when tortured by disease)
 Cheer our sick heart, or purchase ease?
 Can those prolong one gasp of breath,
 Or calm the troubled hour of death?

What's beauty? Call ye that your own?—
 A flower that fades as soon as blown.
 What's man in all his boast of sway?—
 Perhaps the tyrant of a day.

Alike the laws of life take place
 Through every branch of human race:
 The monarch of long regal line
 Was raised from dust as frail as mine.
 Can he pour health into his veins,
 Or cool the fever's restless pains?
 Can he (worn down in Nature's course)
 New-brace his feeble nerves with force?

(1) "Now, get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick: to this favour she must come!"—HAMLET, Act v. Sc. 1.

(2) *Vide* Shelley's "Queen Mab," the opening passages of which afford a striking parallel to the thoughts here, as in fact parts of the whole poem.

Can he (how vain is mortal power!)
Stretch life beyond the destined hour?

Consider, man; weigh well thy frame;
The king, the beggar is the same.
Dust form'd us all. Each breathes his day,
•Then sinks into his native clay.¹

Beneath a venerable yew,
That in the lonely churchyard grew,
Two Ravens sate. In solemn croak
Thus one, his hungry friend, bespoke.

"Methinks I scent some rich repast;
The savour strengthens with the blast;
Snuff then, the promised feast inhale—
I taste the carcase in the gale.
Near yonder trees, the farmer's steed,
From toil and every drudgery freed,
Hath groan'd his last,—a dainty treat!
To Birds of taste, delicious meat."

A Sexton busy at his trade,
To hear their chat, suspends his spade.
Death struck him with no farther thought,
Than merely as the fees he brought.
"Was ever two such blundering fowls;
In brains and manners less than owls!
Blockheads," says he, "learn more respect:
Know ye on whom ye thus reflect?
In this same grave (who does me right,
Must own the work is strong and tight)

(1) "Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium
Versatur urna; serius ocysus
Sors exitura, et nos in æternum
Exilium impositura cymbæ."—HOM. Od. ii. 3.

The Squire that yon fair hall possess'd,
 To-night shall lay his bones at rest.
 Whence could the gross mistake proceed?
 The Squire was somewhat fat indeed ;
 What then? the meanest bird of prey
 Such want of sense could ne'er betray ;
 For sure some difference must be found
 (Suppose the smelling organ, sound)
 In carcases, (say what we can)
 Or where's the dignity of man?"

With due respect to human race,
 The Ravens undertook the case.
 In such similitude of scent,
 Man ne'er could think reflections meant.
 As epicures extol a treat,
 And seem their savoury words to eat,
 They praised dead horse, luxurious food,
 The venison of the prescient brood!

The Sexton's indignation moved,
 The mean comparison reproved ;
 Their undiscerning palate blamed,
 Which two-legg'd carrion thus defamed.

Reproachful speech from either side
 The want of argument supplied :
 They rail, revile—as often ends
 The contest of disputing friends.¹

"Hold," says the fowl, "since human pride
 With confutation ne'er complied,
 Let's state the case, and then refer
 The knotty point ; for taste may err."

(1)

"Defend me from the thing I dread and hate,
 A duel in the form of a debate."—COWPER.

As thus he spoke, from out the mould
 An Earth-worm, huge of size, unroll'd
 His monstrous length. They straight agree
 To choose him as their referee:
 So to th' experience of his jaws,
 Each states the merits of the cause.

He paused, and with a solemn tone,
 Thus made his sage opinion known:

“On carcases of every kind
 This maw hath elegantly dined;
 Provoked by luxury or need,
 On beast, on fowl, on man, I feed;
 Such small distinction's in the savour,
 By turns I choose the fancied flavour:
 Yet I must own (that human beast)
 A glutton, is the rankest feast.
 Man, cease this boast; for human pride
 Hath various tracts to range beside.
 The prince who kept the world in awe,
 The judge whose dictate fix'd the law,
 The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
 Are levell'd—death confounds 'em all.¹
 Then think not that we reptiles share
 Such cates, such elegance of fare;
 The only true and real good
 Of man, was never vermin's food:
 'Tis seated in th' immortal mind;
 Virtue distinguishes mankind,
 And that (as yet ne'er harbour'd here)
 Mounts with the soul, we know not where.

(1) “Ille licet ferro, cautus se condat et ære
 Mors tamen inclusum protrahet inde caput.”

So, good-man Sexton, since the case
Appears with such a dubious face,
To neither I the cause determine,
For different tastes please different vermin."¹

(1) Man, by a species of hypocritical subterfuge, has in every age endeavoured to ape the bully, when he is in heart the veriest coward; and therefore, for one who can meet death with equanimity, we have thousands who have tried to glaze over its terrors with a frothy pretence of philosophy, or have rushed fanatically to meet it, unable to endure the terrors of its anticipation. We admit that by it, "to say we end the heart-ache, and the thousand natural ills that flesh is heir to, is a consummation devoutly to be wished." Yet still—"the dread of something after death—that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns! must give us pause." Hence, whether we paint death, with the Greeks, as a beautiful boy sent to loose the captive soul, or strip him, with the taste of modern times, to skull and crossbones, thereby rendering him more repellent, and making, as Byron says—

"The cold reality too real,"

certain it is, that the greatest wretch, if offered the choice, would sooner bear his burden, than lay it down in the grave; and, though abusing life, is still so unwilling to quit it, as that, with one leg in the grave, the very oldest struggles to keep back the other, as long as he can!

The above remark serves to expose the shallowness of the usual cover we lay over our fear of death, by moral aphorisms. For a real consolation, we must go higher, and so absorb our thoughts in the glories of redeemed life, as to lose sight of the momentary pangs of mere physical dissolution. In this respect, as in every other relation of moral being, the Christian is the only true philosopher, and knowing "Whom he has believed," longs for the time when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and he shall "depart and be with Christ, which is far better!"

The rebuke to pride in the fable is pungent and just; and no principle is so fitted to humble, us as the remembrance of the equality with which we must yield our bodies to corruption, and say unto the worm, "Thou art my mother." (Job xvii.) "If man," as Lear asks, "is no more than this" outwardly, the only element of distinction must be within; and if the power of kings is so limited as to be unable "to add one cubit to the stature," there is no ground for lofty self-sufficiency in the greatest and mightiest child of earth, who, equally with the beggar, is, as a man, "a thing of nought, and whose days pass away like a shadow!"





AY AND NO.

IN Fable all things hold discourse ;
Then Words, no doubt, must talk of course.

Once on a time, near Cannon-row,
Two hostile adverbs, Ay and No,
Were hastening to the field of fight,
And front to front stood opposite.
Before each general join'd the van,
Ay, the more courteous knight, began :—

“Stop, peevish Particle! beware!
I’m told you are not such a bear,
But sometimes yield when offer’d fair.
Suffer yon folks awhile to tattle—
’Tis we who must decide the battle.
Whene’er we war on yonder stage,
With various fate and equal rage,
The nation trembles at each blow
That No gives Ay, and Ay gives No;
Yet, in expensive long contention,
We gain nor office, grant, nor pension.
Why, then, should kinsfolk quarrel thus?
(For two of you make one of us.)
To some wise statesman let us go,
Where each his proper use may know:
He may admit two such commanders,
And make those wait who served in Flanders.
Let’s quarter on a great man’s tongue,
A treasury-lord, not Master Young.
Obsequious at his high command,
Ay shall march forth to tax the land;
Impeachments, No can best resist,
And Ay support the Civil List:
Ay, quick as Cæsar, wins the day,
And No, like Fabius, by delay.
Sometimes in mutual sly disguise,
Let Ay’s seem No’s, and No’s seem Ay’s;
Ay’s be, in courts, denials meant,
And No’s, in bishops give consent.”

Thus Ay proposed—and, for reply,
No, for the first time, answer’d “Ay!”